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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is prepared pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly in a number of resolutions, in which it requested regional organizations and the United Nations to increase contact and identify areas of cooperation, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the resolutions. The Assembly, by paragraph 4 (l) of the annex to resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a single consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. Reports which heretofore had been prepared as separate reports have thus been consolidated into one.

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Part One
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to 12 resolutions,[1] in which the General Assembly called for increased contact and the identification of areas of cooperation between the United Nations and a number of regional organizations, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of those resolutions. In accordance with paragraph 4 (l) of the annex to Assembly resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, on further measures for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General herewith submits a single consolidated report on cooperation with regional organizations, which contains information received from various organizations of the United Nations system on their regional cooperation activities.

2. In 1994, the Secretary-General began to convene high-level meetings with the heads of regional organizations. The fifth such meeting was held on 29 and 30 July 2003, at United Nations Headquarters. The main theme discussed at the meeting was new challenges to international peace and security, including international terrorism. Discussed also were civil and international conflicts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, poverty, organized crime and violations of human rights (see A/58/444-S/2003/1002).

3. Following the meeting, the Secretary-General wrote to the heads of the organizations that took part in the meeting and proposed that the sixth high-level meeting be convened in mid-2005, at which time the desirability and feasibility of meeting annually would also be discussed. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has asked six United Nations departments/organizations to lead the implementation process of the recommendations of the fifth meeting and to produce practical follow-up plans for discussion during the sixth meeting.

II. African Union

4. In the period under review, consultations have continued to be held on a regular basis and at all levels between officials of the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union (AU). The Special Adviser on Africa, representing the Secretary-General, participated in a series of meetings, organized by the Chairperson of AU, that led to the formulation of the vision and strategic framework of AU. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has held discussions with AU on a project to monitor capacity-building efforts that will enable African countries to respond effectively to conflicts, and on global advocacy for African issues and African development in general.

5. Several initiatives have been designed and implemented to help AU to develop its new institutions during its transition from the former Organization of African Unity. United Nations experts helped to draft the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the rules of procedure for the Council which was formally launched on 25 May 2004, and assisted in the establishment of an African standby force and the Common African

Defence and Security Policy which has been approved. AU is considering a United Nations proposal concerning the working methods of the Council and training of its staff. United Nations experts also helped to draft the policy framework for, and are assisting in the development of, the electoral assistance and conference management capabilities of AU.

6. Cooperation between the United Nations and AU was further strengthened through mutual support in the deployment of new and expansion of ongoing peacekeeping activities, both within the United Nations context and the regional framework:

(a) The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) worked alongside the AU-nominated mediator to the inter-Congolese dialogue to achieve an agreement on arrangements for transition, including power-sharing arrangements. The United Nations provided logistical support to the AU-led Joint Military Commission and later re-hatted AU observers into MONUC. AU is an active member of the International Committee in Support of Transition;

(b) The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) continues to coordinate with the AU liaison mission to the Military Coordination Commission;

(c) In Western Sahara, the observer delegation of AU to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) continued to extend its support to the Mission;

(d) In Burundi, the United Nations supported the implementation of the Arusha Agreement and subsequent ceasefire agreements and has been chairing the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the Joint Ceasefire Commission. Following the submission by the Secretary-General of a report to the Security Council recommending the establishment of a multidimensional United Nations operation in Burundi (S/2004/210), the United Nations and AU worked closely to ensure a smooth transition from an African peacekeeping mission in Burundi and United Nations Office in Burundi to the United Nations Operation in Burundi.

7. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, supports the AU goal of promoting peace, security and sustainable development by coordinating international relief efforts in response to humanitarian emergencies in a number of countries of the region, including Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda. During the past year, representatives of the Office drew attention to humanitarian challenges and worked to establish stronger relations with AU in the area of humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters. This relationship has been particularly effective in the Sudan, where AU has played a crucial role in the facilitation of talks between the parties signatory to the humanitarian ceasefire agreement for Darfur, which was signed in April 2004.

8. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recently assisted AU in the establishment of its human rights documentation centre, funded a retreat of the organization on the future of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and funded the travel of three members of the Commission to Geneva in May 2004. The High Commissioner participated in the third ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of AU,

held in Addis Ababa in July 2004. In June and July 2004, the Office of the High Commissioner participated in several AU initiatives concerning Darfur.

9. In July 2002, the World Food Programme (WFP) established a Liaison Office to AU and, in July 2004, appointed a Representative to AU, based in Addis Ababa. Following are the key priorities for joint action, as part of bilateral meetings held in July 2004: (a) facilitating access to the most vulnerable people during armed conflicts; (b) protect women and children during conflict and provide security for aid workers; (c) extending to AU the opportunity of using WFP logistical channels for war or natural disaster victims; and (d) engaging in joint advocacy for low profile and forgotten crises, including post-conflict situations.

10. The Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat has paid close attention to the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union. The quarterly magazine, *Africa Renewal*, reported on the deliberations surrounding the transition and covered every major step in that process. The articles in the magazine covered AU efforts to build up its own peacekeeping and conflict resolution capacities and to promote regional economic integration. AU statements, declarations and speeches have been cited frequently in United Nations articles. United Nations Radio has also actively promoted the work of AU. In 2004, United Nations live radio launched a new, weekly feature programme, "UN and Africa". The executive producer of the programme accompanied the Secretary-General to the recent AU summit meeting and reported extensively on its proceedings.

11. The third phase of the support provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Peace and Security Agenda project is now operational, under a new $6.4 million budget. UNDP played a key role in the establishment of the AU Peace and Security Directorate and is funding eight key policy advisers to the Directorate. UNDP provided the funding for a consultative meeting, held in Cape Town, South Africa, in April 2004, which brought together all African ambassadors to the AU Commission to deliberate on how they could synergize efforts in ensuring that the Peace and Security Council functions most effectively.

12. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and AU have adopted a human rights approach to children's issues. Activities include, especially in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the promotion of a children's agenda, the conduct of joint training to monitor commitments on children and other social issues, and the promotion of the family theme in order to raise a number of critical societal and economic issues regarding the family, women and children in Africa today.

13. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is providing ongoing support to AU on all issues relating to HIV/AIDS. In particular, UNAIDS is providing support for the drafting of the AU, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UNAIDS strategy for monitoring the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, adopted by the Organization of African Unity in 2001, and the formulation by AU of the strategic direction that will guide its new actions. UNAIDS is also providing material and financial assistance for the secretariat of AIDS Watch Africa.

III. Association of Southeast Asian Nations

14. A joint communiqué issued by the 37th Ministerial Meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Jakarta on 30 June 2004 stated, for the first time, that ASEAN was actively considering a request for observer status with the United Nations and that an institutional relationship with the United Nations would support the realization of the goals of the ASEAN community and efforts to strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 57/35 of 21 November 2002.

15. Since 2001, the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and UNDP have jointly organized and sponsored four regional seminars involving government officials and leading academics from all 10 ASEAN member nations and representatives of the ASEAN secretariat on the overall theme of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building in south-east Asia. The first seminar was held in Bangkok in January 2001, the second in Manila in February 2002, the third in Singapore in February 2003 and the fourth in Jakarta in February 2004.

16. The regional seminars have contributed to a better understanding among the United Nations, ASEAN member nations and the ASEAN secretariat of a number of issues, including their respective roles, working methods and identification of the areas in which the two organizations could cooperate in maintaining peace and security in the region. At the 35th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, held in Brunei Darussalam in July 2002, the ASEAN foreign ministers agreed on the need to enhance cooperation with the United Nations as a pre-eminent multilateral institution.

17. At the seminar held in Jakarta, the main theme subject of discussion was the ASEAN Security Community. During the discussion, it was stressed that the United Nations, with its extensive resources, experience and comparative advantage, could help ASEAN to develop its capacity to deal with regional security issues, including non-traditional ones. Recommendations were made with respect to deepening cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN, including through the organization of a forum to discuss lessons learned, the development of joint activities related to humanitarian assistance, preventive measures and an early warning system, and the strengthening of cooperation in peacekeeping operations.

18. It was also recommended that a fifth United Nations and ASEAN regional seminar be held in an ASEAN member country in 2005 to take stock of achievements to date and to set benchmarks for the implementation of priority issues that have been identified in Jakarta and at the previous seminars.

19. The United Nations Development Programme has been a dialogue partner with the ASEAN secretariat since its formation, and has assisted in five cycles of the ASEAN support programme. The programme initially provided support to the ASEAN secretariat for institution-building, and subsequently moved to support for broader development initiatives. The most recent initiative, known as the ASEAN-UNDP Partnership, was launched during the ASEAN post-Ministerial Conference held in Phnom Penh in June 2003. The facility provides analytical and advisory support services to the ASEAN secretariat in addressing current and emerging issues on deepening integration within and outside the ASEAN region. It focuses its technical and advisory services on supporting analysis, dialogue and advocacy on

strategic policy options to accelerate and complete the implementation of regional trade and investment measures. The facility aims to help to narrow the development gap within ASEAN and between ASEAN and other parts of the world and to facilitate and expedite the integration of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam into the Association and broader multilateral arrangements, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation organization and the World Trade Organization (WTO), in the context of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration.

IV. Caribbean Community

20. The United Nations was represented by the Secretary-General's High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States at the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), held in Kingston and St. George's in July 2003 and July 2004, respectively.

21. Early in 2004, a series of high-level consultations focused on the unfolding political crisis in Haiti. The secretariat of CARICOM has kept the United Nations Secretariat abreast of CARICOM efforts to find a solution to the prevailing political impasse in Haiti by sharing its Prior Action Plan with the United Nations and discussing the steps for its implementation and areas of possible cooperation. The rapid deterioration of the situation in Haiti, particularly in February 2004, made further follow-up to the Prior Action Plan impossible.

22. On 24 February 2004, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Adviser on Haiti, who met in March 2004 with the then Chairman of CARICOM, Prime Minister P. J. Patterson of Jamaica, to discuss long-term cooperation in regard to Haiti. In follow-up to the meeting, the Special Adviser participated in the intersessional meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, held in Basseterre. Since then, the Special Adviser and the representatives of the Department of Political Affairs and Department of Peacekeeping Operations have kept close contact with CARICOM officials concerning Haiti.

23. In his report on Haiti (S/2004/300), the Secretary-General has highlighted the increasingly prominent political role of CARICOM in that country, and has suggested the establishment of a multidimensional stabilization operation and outlined its mandate, size and structure. He welcomed the participation of regional organizations such as CARICOM within the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which enhanced collective efforts in Haiti. Subsequently, the Security Council requested that, in carrying out its mandate, MINUSTAH cooperate and coordinate with CARICOM.

24. In 2003, CARICOM participated in the fifth high-level meeting in New York between the United Nations and regional organizations (see para. 2 above). The third general meeting between the United Nations and CARICOM and its associated institutions was held in New York in April 2004. Action taken in follow-up to the second general meeting were reviewed and assessed, and it was considered that substantial progress had been achieved in the area of United Nations-CARICOM cooperation. Participants underlined the importance of and their active engagement in, the preparations for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of

the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing Countries to be held in Mauritius in August 2004.

25. In the areas of conflict prevention, governance and security, CARICOM welcomed increased cooperation and coordination with the United Nations system. CARICOM has committed itself to strengthening processes of democratization by sharing best practice and supporting a more active participation of civil society in governance. While advocating measures to strengthen democracy through improvements in the electoral systems and electoral monitoring, CARICOM has embarked on re-examining current systems of governance in the region. Closely collaborating with the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, CARICOM has been active in developing mechanisms and measures to counter terrorist threats. Participants in the third general meeting between the United Nations and CARICOM advocated an improvement in the information-sharing, consultative and negotiation processes as an indispensable tool for early warning, conflict prevention, and peace and confidence-building in the region, which would require skilled human resources and adequate financial and material support.

26. Institutional arrangements for United Nations-CARICOM cooperation and training were discussed, and the need for improved coordination of activities stressed. Participants in the third general meeting expressed their appreciation for the holding of general meetings, which provided an umbrella mechanism for evaluating existing cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM and offered the opportunity to explore new means and areas of cooperation. The need to convene review meetings on a regular basis in order to identify and deal with the problems and constraints of the relationship between the two organizations was stressed.

27. Some participants from the United Nations system provided conference papers on their cooperation with CARICOM and provided input for the final report of the meeting. Participants agreed on a joint statement (see annex).

V. Council of Europe

28. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe has continued through direct contact between the secretariats of the two organizations and between the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system and the Council. The secretaries-general of the two organizations have continued to exchange formal communications on an array of issues. Practical cooperation at the working level in the field continues with United Nations missions and agencies.

29. In the area of peacekeeping, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Council collaborate through their representatives in Kosovo. The Kosovo Decentralization Mission of the Council provided UNMIK with detailed recommendations on the reform of local self-government in Kosovo, and the Council helped to assess damage to the cultural and religious heritage of Kosovo as a result of rioting in mid-March 2004. Likewise, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) maintained regular contact with the Council at all levels and held meetings with its parliamentary delegations and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (more commonly known as the Venice Commission). In February 2004, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia participated in the target-oriented meeting and the

high-level tripartite meeting, held in Vienna, at which the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe discussed cooperation and strategy for the South Caucasus.

30. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has, since its inception, actively contributed to the activities of the Council of Europe to strengthen both intra-European and Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and cooperation in humanitarian action and disaster relief. In the framework of the Fribourg Process, the Office hosted a meeting of permanent correspondents and observers to the agreement in Geneva, where, for the first time, United Nations agencies, European institutions, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and non-governmental organizations worked together to review EUR-OPA activities to ensure synergy in programmes and initiatives, and to bring value-added to the work plan of the agreement.

31. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe maintain close cooperative relations in the fields of education, science and technology, culture and communication, in particular media-related issues. They participate in each other's meetings on a regular basis, including the meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council and its standing committees, and share their experience in the areas of mutual interest, in particular through the World Heritage Centre.

32. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Council of Europe meet at regular intervals for mutual briefings and the exchange of policy information. As one of the priority partners of WHO, the Council was represented by its Directorate General of Social Cohesion and its Health Programme at the meeting of the WHO regional committee meeting which was hosted by the Government of Austria in September 2003. In follow-up, the Council has been invited to participate in the regional working group established to update the Health for All strategy for Europe, with a specific focus on the issue of ethics.

VI. Economic Community of Central African States

33. Consultations have continued to be held on a regular basis at various levels between the officials of the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The General Assembly, inter alia, had invited the international community to consider supporting ECCAS in the area of economic integration and the implementation of its peace and security programmes, in particular the effective establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and the Central African early warning system, MARAC (Mécanisme d'alerte rapide de l'Afrique centrale). The two organizations held discussions on developing close cooperation in regard to peacekeeping issues, including training, early warning mechanisms and strengthening the subregional situation rooms.

34. The Department of Political Affairs has continued to strengthen cooperation with ECCAS member States and the ECCAS secretariat, especially on issues related to conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace-building, electoral support and capacity-building. To that end, discussions have been held on specific areas of assistance to ensure the effective functioning of COPAX, MARAC and the Multinational Force for Central Africa (FOMAC). The Department has also initiated

discussions with ECCAS to explore how it can contribute to the enhancement of the capacity of its staff.

35. In his continued efforts to support the role of regional States and institutions in Central Africa and at the request of the Security Council, the Secretary-General in June 2003 dispatched to the Central African subregion a multidisciplinary assessment mission led by the Department of Political Affairs, in close partnership with ECCAS. The Deputy Secretary-General of ECCAS and a senior military officer participated in the mission which was mandated to explore ways in which to implement a comprehensive, integrated and resolute approach to the issues of peace, security and development in Central Africa. During its visit to Libreville, the mission attended a military exercise of FOMAC, Byongho 2003, which regroups contingents from ECCAS member States in joint peace operations aimed at preparing them to deal with crises.

36. There are currently two United Nations mechanisms dealing with issues relating to peace and security in Central Africa. One is the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, located in Yaoundé, which was established in June 2002 at the request of the Governments of the subregion to help build national capacities in the areas of human rights and democracy by providing support to Governments, national institutions and non-governmental organizations. The second is the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was established in 1992 to promote arms limitation, disarmament and confidence-building measures and is the main forum for the discussion of subregional peace and security issues. The Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat serves as the secretariat of the Committee.

37. The Subregional Centre has cooperated with ECCAS by participating in the two biannual meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee and by organizing for subregional justice ministry and defence officials a joint training seminar on military justice, which was held in Libreville in December 2003. The Centre has also maintained cooperation with the ECCAS early warning mechanism, MARAC. Furthermore, in providing support to the Secretary-General's special representatives and envoys dispatched to the subregion, the Centre assists and consults ECCAS as appropriate.

38. Several United Nations programmes and agencies are also involved with cross-cutting issues and implement regional projects through their subregional offices in the area. In this regard, it should be noted that the ECA Subregional Development Centre for Central Africa has developed subregional integration projects on water, energy, transport and communications.

39. In 2003, UNDP started a regional project to support ECCAS in strengthening capacities for regional cooperation and integration. The project, executed by the International Trade Centre is aimed at relaunching subregional economic integration by lowering the national barriers that impede the movement of persons, goods, services, capital and ideas in the subregion. The project focuses on activities that support the development of institutional capacity in the ECCAS secretariat and, at the same time, require the secretariat to work closely with Governments, the subregional business community and civil society in order to promote partnerships, thus facilitating the successful economic integration of ECCAS. The project is expected to provide a better understanding of opportunities for trade and investment

within the subregion, which would be shared with all relevant stakeholders. The project is also aimed at increasing the short-term mobility of persons, especially those from the business sector, within the subregion through the creation of an ECCAS common passport.

40. The United Nations Children's Fund provides support to all ECCAS countries in their development efforts and humanitarian needs. UNICEF assistance is carried out in the framework of the programmes of cooperation that are jointly prepared with Governments and take into account national policies and priorities. Although they differ from one country to the other, the programmes are consistent with the overall framework of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan which covers early childhood development, education of girls, the fight against HIV/AIDS, immunization campaigns and child protection. UNICEF, in collaboration with Governments and in coordination with the United Nations country teams, has provided humanitarian assistance to ECCAS countries which have recently experienced or are experiencing emergency or crisis situations. It provides humanitarian assistance in the following key areas: life-saving mass immunization campaign for children; nutrition; provision of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities; fight against HIV/AIDS; education; and child protection.

VII. League of Arab States

41. During the past two years, the United Nations and the League of Arab States (LAS) have continued close and multifaceted cooperation with a view to strengthening the capacities of the two organizations in addressing challenges to peace and security, development and social progress. Representatives of 26 United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes and representatives from 19 LAS institutions participated in the eighth General Meeting of the United Nations and LAS. The General Meeting gave impetus to cooperation on concrete joint projects and emphasized the importance of increasing interaction between the two organizations in conflict prevention.

42. The Conference for the Implementation, By the Arab States, of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in Cairo in December 2003, was the first such conference organized in the region by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in cooperation with LAS.

43. In October 2003, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights established a committee of experts from the Arab region to comment on the draft Arab Charter for Human Rights which had been finalized by the Arab Human Rights Commission. The Arab Human Rights Commission adopted a text in January 2004 which reflected many of the recommendations made by the experts. The Charter was adopted by the sixteenth Summit Conference of the Council of the League of Arab States, held in Tunis in May 2004.

44. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and LAS have collaborated in the areas of data collection and analysis, advocacy, population policy review and preparations for the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. In collaboration with the International Organization on Migration (IOM), UNFPA and other partners, LAS organized a conference on Arab Migration in a globalized world as an important scientific event in the field of migration

policies. UNICEF provided critical financial and technical expertise and support for children as victims of war, conflict and natural disasters within the region.

45. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and LAS worked together on a range of development issues. Cooperation among the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and LAS focused on the preparations for the Arab/International Forum for Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, to be held in Beirut in September 2004. LAS and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East continued to cooperate on a variety of issues.

46. At the eighth General Meeting of the United Nations and LAS, it was agreed to enhance cooperation between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization in various areas, including the strengthening of technological capacity, development of a centre of training and excellence on industrial information and networks, and fostering of a cleaner production concept in the Arab region in support of the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and LAS cooperate in (a) ensuring sustainable natural resource management; (b) empowering the rural poor and their organizations; (c) enhancing the livelihoods of the rural poor, with particular attention to rural poor women; and (d) diversifying incomes of the rural poor.

47. Late in 2002, the President of the World Bank met with the Secretary-General of LAS and, early in 2003, a World Bank delegation visited LAS headquarters to discuss areas for possible cooperation, including increased cooperation in human resources development and knowledge infrastructure. The World Bank works with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund and other organizations on such issues as trade, education, employment and gender.

48. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Arab Civil Aviation Commission, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), WHO and LAS have continued to cooperate on a range of issues within their respective purviews. In June 2004, UNESCO and LAS signed an agreement for a new programme of cooperation that specifies concrete activities for cooperation in promoting tolerance, dialogue, communication and dissemination of information. In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, LAS has organized and participated in seminars promoting ratification of the international instruments against terrorism and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto.

VIII. Organization of the Islamic Conference

49. Consultations at all levels continue to be held on a regular basis between the United Nations and officials of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on political, economic, social and humanitarian issues. During the period under review, consultations focused on the situation in the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Sudan, as well as on conflict prevention and the fight against terrorism.

50. Representatives of the United Nations attended the tenth session of the Islamic Summit Conference held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, in October 2003, and the thirtieth and thirty-first sessions of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held, respectively, in Tehran in 2003 and in Istanbul in 2004. The OIC ministerial delegation formed to establish contacts with the Quartet[2] and permanent members of the Security Council and other relevant parties, met with the Secretary-General on 2 June 2004.

51. The general meeting to evaluate the existing mechanisms of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC and their institutions was held at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 13 to 15 July 2004. The meeting produced a number of proposals to enhance liaison and the exchange of expertise in the political field, and decided on a series of joint projects to be implemented by the institutions in such areas as science, technology, trade, food security, agriculture, human resources development, environment, health, arts and promotion of heritage, and education.

52. The United Nations and its institutions have continued to carry out joint activities and programmes and to exchange information and documents with the specialized and affiliated institutions and subsidiary organs of OIC in support of social, economic and cultural development, and have participated in each other's meetings, workshops, seminars and capacity-building activities. United Nations agencies considered their partnership with OIC counterparts to be important for development strategies and in the effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They cooperate and collaborate with OIC and its institutions, including the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC), the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, either directly or through their regional offices and centres.

53. The Permanent Observer Mission of OIC and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs actively collaborated in planning the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) cooperated with SESRTCIC on a number of issues, and IFAD and the Islamic Development Bank undertake joint projects in rural development and poverty alleviation. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ISESCO developed joint environmental programmes and strategies in resource management in regard to environmental health, education and law. UNESCO and ISESCO jointly focused on the development of renewable energies, water management and scientific equipment and jointly financed projects on education, sustainable development, communication and cultural dialogue. UNICEF expanded its activities with OIC and launched a report in 2003 on the well-being of children in OIC countries, highlighting the successes, setbacks and challenges that OIC member States face in meeting their commitments made at the special session of the General Assembly on children, held in May 2002. UNIDO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) are also among the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies that collaborate with OIC.

IX. Organization of American States

54. Regular consultations have continued at all levels between the officials of the United Nations Secretariat and the Organization of American States (OAS). The Department for Disarmament Affairs and OAS collaborate through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Regional Centre and OAS also cooperate with other organizations, including Interpol and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

55. There is close United Nations cooperation with OAS on arms transparency. In March 2004, OAS and the Department for Disarmament Affairs discussed the progress made in regard to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, including progress made at the regional level. A jointly designed web-based small arms and light weapons administration system provides information on project-related activities of the Centre and its partners. The Centre, OAS and their partners have destroyed 20,577 firearms, 272,062 small-calibre units of ammunition and 70,601.67 tons of high-calibre ammunition in joint operations in, respectively, Brazil, Argentina and Peru in 2002, and in Paraguay in 2003. Training seminars and courses, including some on the commercial trade and illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and ammunition are jointly organized. Dialogue to increase coordination in the region in order to effectively curb illicit regional trafficking is also promoted.

56. The Security Council has emphasized the importance of cooperation between MINUSTAH and OAS and CARICOM in Haiti. There has been enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and these regional organizations, especially with regard to planning for elections in 2005.

57. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States is working closely with regional groups and small island developing States in the region in preparation for the international meeting scheduled to be held in Mauritius in January 2005. Over one million dollars have been raised to facilitate the participation of small island developing States in the meeting. A priority target for cooperation between the Office of the High Representative and OAS is the use of information technology to improve the delivery of social services.

58. Coordination between the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and OAS on key analytical and policy issues associated with regional integration has increased, particularly in regard to sustainable development and gender issues. ECLAC cooperates with OAS institutions, such as the Inter-American Development Bank to provide technical support for the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas and to its Joint Government-Private Sector Committee of Experts on Electronic Commerce. Together with OAS, IOM and UNFPA, ECLAC organized the hemispheric conference on human rights of migrants and trafficking in human beings in the Americas, held in Santiago de Chile, in November 2002.

59. The United Nations Secretariat, funds, programmes and agencies and OAS consult and exchange information on a regular basis. For example, UN-Habitat and OAS collaborate on issues dealing with development cooperation, such as support to local authorities and local governance, disaster vulnerability reduction and information systems for improved settlements management; the International

Labour Organization (ILO) collaborates with OAS most particularly through the technical cooperation project on principles and rights at work which seeks to contribute to the overall application of ILO fundamental principles and rights and to the improvement of employment and social conditions of the hemisphere's people. ITU collaborates with OAS in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in the development of efficient telecommunication services.

60. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and OAS cooperate and collaborate on a number of issues, including the regional education indicators project and projects related to natural sciences and water resources. As a member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, OAS is involved in the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the development of disaster mitigation plans for cities. UNESCO has been cooperating closely with the OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression on legislation in the region that may limit media diversity or restrict the dissemination of certain opinions.

61. WHO provides technical support to OAS on many issues, including bio-terrorism, security and disaster response. WHO attends meetings of the OAS Friends of Haiti group and collaborates with OAS and other entities to provide relief and support to Haiti. WHO and OAS have supported the Interim Cooperation Framework launched in April 2004, which set the priorities in Haiti for the forthcoming two years. WHO has set up an emergency operations centre to monitor and respond to conditions in Haiti and is working through a network of partners to distribute drugs, medical supplies and fuel to public hospitals.

62. The United Nations Environment Programme and OAS provide joint technical support to the health and environment ministries of the Americas process. In addition, OAS is the executing agency for several UNEP projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. In May 2004, UNICEF, in collaboration with OAS and others, organized a regional follow-up meeting to the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, which was convened in San Jose to review the advances made in the region since the Montevideo and Yokohama commitments made in 2001. In October 2002, UNICEF also provided information to the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on the situation of children's rights in Latin America and the Caribbean.

X. International Organization of la Francophonie

63. The meeting between the Secretary General of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, held in November 2003 in New York, led to strengthened collaboration between the two organizations in areas of common interest, including matters of international peace and security. Following that meeting, the United Nations and OIF jointly organized a workshop on early warning and conflict prevention, held at OIF headquarters from 5 to 7 April 2004. A preliminary meeting had already been organized on 4 February 2004 in Paris to develop a shared concept on early warning and conflict prevention. That initiative should lead in the coming months to the organization of an international workshop on the topic of early warning and conflict prevention.

64. In Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations and OIF are cooperating within the international Follow-up Committee established pursuant to the Linas-Marcoussis

Agreement and combining their efforts to promote reconciliation between the various parties of Côte d'Ivoire. In the Comoros, under the auspices of the African Union, OIF and the United Nations made a significant contribution to the conclusion of the Agreement of 20 December 2003. OIF contributed to the establishment of a trust fund to support the transitional arrangements in the Comoros, which is being managed by UNDP. In Haiti, OIF, in cooperation with the United Nations, participated actively in the development of an interim framework for cooperation, prepared under the auspices of the Haitian Government and civil society, for which a donor conference was held in Washington, D.C. on 19 and 20 July 2004.

65. In the area of elections, OIF organized a meeting in Paris on 9 February 2004 to discuss comparative electoral policies, in which the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs and UNDP, among others, took part. The United Nations and OIF simultaneously sent a preparatory mission on the electoral process to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in November 2003 with a view to the elections scheduled for June 2005. The United Nations and OIF are also strengthening their collaboration to assist the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire to prepare for the elections scheduled in each of the countries in 2005.

66. In the area of technical assistance, the junior professional officers programme created by OIF to sponsor young professionals from francophone developing countries has continued. During the period under consideration, 20 posts for francophone junior professional officers were financed by the Intergovernmental Agency of la Francophonie (AIF) and made available to some 15 departments of the Secretariat and agencies of the United Nations system through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In 2002, the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department, OIF and France initiated the joint funding of a regional information officer post for the Small Island Developing States of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas.

67. From 12 to 23 May 2003, UNCTAD, OIF, WTO and the Léopold Sédar Senghor University jointly organized in Alexandria, Egypt the third training course for negotiators of international investment agreements from francophone African countries. UNCTAD, the Foreign Investment Advisory Service of the World Bank and OIF have launched a study of the investment climate in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community.

68. In order to ensure overall consistency of the activities conducted by development partners for integrating the least developed countries into the world economy, AIF has established, in partnership with ITC, a fund earmarked to support the activities of the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.

69. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research cooperated with OIF on the Fellowship Programme on the International Civil Service, which took place, successively, in Yaoundé, Paris and Geneva in 2003 and 2004.

70. AIF enabled the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat to strengthen the development of the French-language portion of the United Nations Internet site and to develop new pages through the provision of a francophone junior professional.

71. Cooperation between ECA and OIF made possible the provision, from July 2002 to July 2004, of a junior information and communications professional within

the cabinet of the ECA Executive Secretary. ECA and OIF have also established fruitful cooperative relations in the area of technical and financial support for the African Centre for Gender and Development.

72. In the area of the rights of the child, collaboration between UNICEF and OIF should lead to the issuance of a joint report on the well-being of children in francophone countries during the Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in November 2004 in Ouagadougou.

73. In the area of human rights protection, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and OIF organized in October 2003 a preparatory meeting concerning various areas of collaboration. OIF also supported the participation of delegates from several of its member States at the fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions of the Commission on Human Rights.

74. In the area of education, OIF is collaborating with UNESCO to support the development of national plans of action on education for all. OIF is participating actively in the work being done within UNESCO to develop an international legal instrument on cultural diversity and to promote the adoption of such an instrument by the General Conference in 2005.

75. OIF contributed to the work of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, which took place in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, particularly by promoting the mobilization and involvement of all the francophone actors concerned with preparing for and contributing to the work of that Summit.

XI. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

76. Consultations have continued to be held on a regular basis at all levels between officials of the United Nations Secretariat and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Secretary-General has been represented at the annual meetings of the OSCE Ministerial Council, and the Secretary-General of OSCE has participated in meetings of the Security Council devoted to cooperation with regional organizations. Annual working-level meetings, which were initiated in 2001, were held in Vienna in May 2003 and in New York in May 2004; these meetings further enhanced contacts between substantive units of both secretariats. The Secretariat has also participated in a number of conferences organized by OSCE.

77. In the context of the ongoing collaboration within the framework of the tripartite process of informal consultations among the United Nations, OSCE and the Council of Europe, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva chaired the twelfth session in Geneva in February 2003, which discussed cooperation in the fight against terrorism and trafficking in human beings. The thirteenth high-level meeting, chaired by the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre in February 2004, examined how to respond to threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century. Both meetings were preceded by target-oriented meetings, at which the organizations discussed in greater detail specific areas of cooperation and strategy.

78. At the meeting in 2004, agreement was reached on improved collaboration, at both the field and headquarter levels, in responding to the many threats to security and stability, ranging from curbing organized crime and corruption, to protecting the

rights of trafficked persons, to fostering economic and environmental cooperation, to proper border management and to international cooperation in police-related activities. Consensus was also reached on the need for a common and effective framework to combat terrorist acts and a comprehensive approach to security, emphasizing the link between long-term development and conflict prevention. Highlighting the importance of preventive action to counter terrorism, the organizations noted that respect for the rule of law and human rights remained a sound basis for responding to the threat of terrorism. Also, the Millennium Development Goals were recognized as a framework for collaboration. The participating organizations pledged to step up cooperation to curb organized crime and corruption which pose a threat to human security. They also agreed to set up a communication network to launch an awareness-raising campaign on human trafficking issues. Proper border management and cross-border cooperation were seen as key tools for addressing the many threats and challenges to security and stability. Participants stressed the need for better coordination of the assistance provided by the international community in this area.

79. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo cooperates with OSCE and other regional organizations through the UNMIK "pillar" system, whereby individual organizations are responsible for specific areas of the reconstruction and development of Kosovo. One pillar is run and funded by OSCE and is responsible for institution-building, human rights, police training, media and elections. UNOMIG and OSCE cooperated closely with the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, and UNOMIG assisted the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities in exploring possibilities for educational projects in the conflict zone.

80. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) enjoys a close working relationship with OSCE in the economic and environmental areas. ECE provides to OSCE, on a regular basis, economic analyses, and information on its various norms, standards and conventions and its extensive networks of experts from both the public and private sector. In addition, since 1996, it has undertaken for OSCE an annual review of the performance of the OSCE member States in implementing their economic and environmental commitments.

81. The United Nations Children's Fund continues to collaborate with OSCE in a number of areas that promote the rights of women and children. UNICEF works with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and OSCE field missions and, in general, provides a child rights perspective in OSCE policies and programmes, meetings and training programmes. Other areas of cooperation include juvenile justice, the development of the first Roma strategy, education and the problem of children affected by armed conflict.

82. Contacts also occur on a regular basis between OSCE and a number of other United Nations entities, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNDP and UNHCR. Cooperation has been particularly close between field presences in south-eastern Europe and in Central Asia.

XII. Pacific Islands Forum

83. During the period under review, consultations continued to be held on a regular basis at various levels between United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) officials, in particular, in regard to achieving stable peace and security in the Pacific. The Secretary-General welcomed the initiative to deploy in July 2003 the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon (RAMSI), which was carried out at the request of the Government of Solomon Islands and on the basis of the Biketawa Declaration, adopted by PIF. The Security Council was briefed by the United Nations Secretariat before it endorsed the operation. As a follow-up to this regional initiative, the Department of Political Affairs and UNDP undertook a needs assessment mission to Solomon Islands to determine the additional support needed to move the peace-building and reconciliation process forward and to complement the activities of RAMSI.

84. The United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) works closely with the parties to the peace agreement and regional partners. Steady progress is being made in constitution-making. UNOMB facilitated weapons destruction and reconciliation among the Bougainvillean parties. There are plans for a regional workshop on security issues to provide practical recommendations and lesson learned for the region in order to help to address the fundamental causes of instability without impinging upon human rights.

85. Senior officials of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) participated in the seventh annual Forum of Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM), held in the Marshall Islands in June 2003. ESCAP is focusing on research into poverty and development topics, and identification of trends and policy implications in assisting Pacific island developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In 2003, the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre assisted in several programme activities in urban development and management, energy development, statistics, trade and investment, poverty reduction and social development.

86. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has been providing support to PIF on issues related to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture, Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. It also rendered technical and organizational support to the senior officials meeting on the Regional Programme for Food Security, held in Apia in June 2003, and, together with the Asian Development Bank and ESCAP, organized a high-level round-table meeting on spearheading subregional programmes and cooperation for the eradication of poverty and food insecurity in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok in February 2003.

87. UN-Habitat, in close coordination with UNDP, is providing specialized technical support to Pacific island countries in implementing the Pacific urban agenda. ICAO has continued to work closely with the Pacific island States in the development of an aviation action plan. In June and July 2004, IFAD fielded a subregional strategy mission in the Pacific with a view to identifying projects to be considered by IFAD and other official development assistance (ODA) agencies for future grant or loan funding. ILO cooperation with the PIF secretariat is mostly in the area of information sharing. Cooperation between IMF and PIF is being

implemented through the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre in Suva. IMF also participates in the annual FEMM. United Nations entities dealing with HIV/AIDS include UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNFPA; the former two, with WHO, share lead-agency responsibility in reporting on HIV/AIDS in relation to the Millennium Development Goals.

88. The United Nations Development Programme holds its consultations during the annual meetings of the Pacific island countries and partners, which are coordinated by the PIF secretariat and held back-to-back with FEMM. UNDP is invited to various other ministerial meetings and undertakes joint assessment missions with the PIF secretariat. FEMM has endorsed the drafting of a regional report concerning the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) closely cooperates with PIF and UNDP to pilot a process for developing gender-responsive early warning indicators for the region.

89. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has provided support and funding for the three meetings of the Pacific ministers of education, which were attended by the Director General of UNESCO. The UNESCO office in Apia is represented on the advisory committee set up to direct a new Pacific education plan which is being funded by the European Union and is on the committee that oversees the project's progress.

90. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects outlines numerous initiatives to be undertaken by States to address the global proliferation and misuse of illicit small arms. In order to assist regional organizations in tackling this issue, the Geneva Forum[3] convened, in January 2004, a seminar on the theme "The role of regional organizations in stemming the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons: sharing experience and drawing lessons".

91. As a follow-up to the 2001 regional workshop on constraints, challenges and prospects for commodity-based development and diversification, UNCTAD, in close cooperation with PIF, had plans to host early in July 2004 a workshop on the development of senile coconut palmwood into high quality, value-added products in selected Pacific island countries.

92. The Government of Japan informed the Secretary-General of the third summit meeting Japan and PIF, held in Okinawa, Japan, in May 2003, and the adoption of the Okinawa Initiative: Regional Development Strategy for a More Prosperous and Safer Pacific and the related Joint Action Plan. The Joint Action Plan sets five policy targets: enhanced security in the Pacific region; a safer and more sustainable environment; improved education and human development; better health; and more robust and sustained trade and economic growth.

93. Malaysia has approved a contribution of US$ 20,000 to the PIF Regional Security Fund, established in November 2002 to facilitate an urgent response to crisis situations and to enable ongoing activities in this area by the PIF secretariat.

94. New Zealand liaises with the United Nations Secretariat and UNDP in respect of the Bougainville and Solomon Islands peace processes. New Zealand facilitates meetings between the group of member States of PIF in New York and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. The Counter-Terrorism Committee and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime participated in a Pacific counter-

terrorism round-table meeting hosted by the Government of New Zealand in Wellington, in May 2004. The meeting focused on helping Pacific States to implement the provisions of Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1373 (2001). Further information on recent regional cooperative efforts is contained in A/59/95.

XIII. Southern African Development Community

95. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) continued to deepen its relations and cooperation with the international community and the United Nations system during the period under review. The quarterly magazine prepared by the Department of Public Information, *Africa Renewal*, provided extensive coverage of the progress made towards regional integration in Africa.

96. On 8 March 2002, SADC adopted a document, "Consensus statement and the way ahead", in which it articulated the strategic direction for the Community in key areas related to economic and social development, the further integration of the region, HIV/AIDS, peace, security, democracy, human rights and international and regional partnerships. SADC submitted, in April 2004, a request to the Secretary-General that SADC be accredited observer status with the General Assembly. SADC has concluded memorandums of understanding with ILO, WHO and UNESCO and has continued consultations with UNDP. Close collaboration with UNDP and SADC continued through the programme to strengthen Africa's regional capacity in conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict recovery. In collaboration with UNESCO, a SADC regional centre of peace studies will be established at the University of Botswana; the centre will focus on the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

97. Since the humanitarian crisis during the period 2002 to 2003, sparked by the massive food shortages in the region, the United Nations effectiveness in engaging in humanitarian assistance significantly increased through the establishment of the OCHA Regional Support Office for Southern Africa and the Regional Inter-Agency Support Coordination Office (RIASCO). OCHA promoted common methodologies of assessment that lead to the agencies represented at RIASCO to commit to expanding and strengthening vulnerability assessments, surveillance and monitoring capacities. The Southern African Humanitarian Information Management System was established to ensure better management of information and OCHA is currently exploring ways to establish partnerships with relevant SADC departments in order to consolidate existing databases on vulnerability analysis and mapping.

98. International cooperation for development in the SADC region continued at multiple levels, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. FAO collaborated closely with SADC in strengthening the implementation of the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit.

99. The Economic Commission for Africa, UNDP, UNIFEM and the SADC secretariat collaborated in the promotion of gender equality in the region through joint capacity-building activities, advisory services to national programmes and studies. In a related initiative, UNDP sponsored the first women's ministerial round-table meeting, which focused on women's economic development and launched the second phase of the regional gender programme in February 2004, aimed at

establishing policy guidelines and strategies to accelerate access by women entrepreneurs to the management of larger economic resources.

100. The World Health Organization delivered programmes to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health. In the context of supporting countries in humanitarian crisis and to ensure a high degree of preparedness, regional guidelines were prepared as to how the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) approach to child health could be implemented to reduce high infant and child mortality. WHO provided support to countries in building a pool of health personnel trained in the effective management of common childhood illnesses, and in improving health systems and family and community practices. Specific assistance to women and children victims of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations has been initiated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The WHO Collaboration Centre at the Reproductive Health Unit, University of Witwaterstand, was established to strengthen the research capacity in the region.

101. Collaboration in combating HIV/AIDS continued to be a priority area. SADC, together with UNAIDS, facilitated the implementation by member States of the SADC strategic framework for regional cooperation in combating HIV/AIDS and the related operational plan (2003-2007). ECA conducted in-depth case studies in five countries on the impact of HIV/AIDS on development efforts and provided advisory services in that regard.

102. All SADC member States are signatories to major multilateral environmental agreements. SADC collaborated with the secretariats of these conventions and a number of programmes in facilitating access by member States to the various sources of funding provided in support of the implementation of their corresponding national action programmes.

103. With regard to the region's capacity for sustainable resource management, SADC and UNDP collaborated in support of integrated water resources management. IFAD has also been an important partner in supporting water management activities and in identifying new approaches to investment in agricultural water supply. WMO continued its partnership with SADC in the development and upgrading of the infrastructure of national meteorological and hydrological services and in capacity-building. WMO also continued to provide support to the SADC Drought Monitoring Centre in Harare, which provides the countries in the region with information on weather, climate and rainfall, as well as early warning advisories.

104. The World Bank Group supported the SADC market integration and cooperation agenda by means of analytical and advisory services and grant funding for a range of sector-specific areas, including two investment operations. IMF provided technical assistance and support on a regional basis to SADC to supplement its policy advice to individual member countries.

105. The efforts of SADC to achieve improved performance and coordination of macroeconomic policies, greater harmonization of fiscal policy and fewer barriers to trade and private investment have been supported by UNCTAD. Other organizations, such as the International Maritime Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization have also continued collaboration with SADC in their respective areas.

106. In the area of bilateral cooperation, Finland provided significant humanitarian assistance to Southern Africa during the reporting period, as well as support for the development of information and communication and forestry and gene technology in SADC organizations. Japan provided advisory services to the SADC secretariat and financial support in the areas of economic infrastructure, HIV/AIDS and food security, and contributed more than US$ 300 million towards mine clearance, advocacy, assistance to refugees and technical cooperation. Sweden reported that a significant part of its official development assistance to the region was concentrated on project support for conflict prevention, good governance, human rights and humanitarian assistance.

107. The United States of America, through the Regional Centre for Southern Africa of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided development assistance in the following areas: support in trade facilitation (transportation, customs and free trade agreements), electricity, information and communication technology, competition policy support, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, water resources and provision of support to programmes directed at strengthening democratic institutions in SADC countries. Additional support focused on collaborating with the SADC Parliamentary Forum in the development of election norms and standards, election observation, promotion of gender equality in parliaments and conflict resolution. USAID also provided support for programmes that monitor the performance of SADC in regard to principles and declarations to which the Community had committed itself (for further information, see http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/rcsa).

Notes

[1] Resolutions 57/48 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union; 57/35 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of South-East Asian Nations; 57/41 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community; 57/156 of 16 December 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe; 57/40 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States; 57/43 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie; 57/46 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States; 57/298 of 20 December 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; 57/157 of 16 December 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States; 57/42 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Conference; 57/37 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Island Forum; and 57/44 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community.

[2] United Nations, European Union, Russian Federation and United States of America.

[3] A joint initiative of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the Quaker United Nations Office located in Geneva and the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies of the Geneva Graduate Institute for International Studies.

Annex

Joint statement issued at the third General Meeting between representatives of the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions and the United Nations system

United Nations, New York, 12-13 April 2004

1. The third General Meeting between the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations programmes and funds, the specialized agencies and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) secretariat and associated institutions was convened at United Nations Headquarters on 12 and 13 April 2004. The CARICOM delegation was led by the Secretary-General of CARICOM, Edwin W. Carrington. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Louise Fréchette, opened the meeting on behalf of the United Nations system. The meeting was attended by a number of senior and other United Nations officials.

2. In his opening statement, the Secretary-General of CARICOM stressed the importance of sustainable development, particularly in relation to small island developing States. He provided details of the efforts and progress made by CARICOM in regard to the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and its institutions and principles, notably the Caribbean Court of Justice and the free movement of persons and freedom of establishment. He indicated the progress made to date in the region in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, cautioning that considerable investment would be required in the areas of health and education to fulfil them. He underlined the critical issues of food security, poverty alleviation and capacity-building, especially in the area of information and communication technology.

3. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations emphasized the need for an international trading system that would bring development gains on the basis of a restored Doha process. She noted that cooperation would be necessary to build up capacity, diversify exports and avoid a resort to protectionism. She stressed the importance of combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region and made specific reference to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, adopted in Barbados. Concerning regional security, she called for further cooperation among the United Nations, CARICOM and OAS and increased efforts to fight such threats as political violence, money-laundering, drug trafficking and smuggling.

4. A number of issues were discussed in connection with cooperation between CARICOM and the United Nations system, following the second General Meeting held in Nassau in March 2000. While satisfaction was expressed with the implementation of the decisions taken at that meeting, a number of constraints and lessons learned were identified in order to enhance cooperation between CARICOM and the United Nations system. Cooperation required an integrated and intersectoral approach, as well as a strategic programming framework to coordinate the technical assistance provided by the United Nations system.

5. The discussion covered the following main themes: the positioning of CARICOM in the global economy; Caribbean human and social development; issues of regional security; and institutional arrangements and training.

6. The meeting noted the progress made in regard to a wide range of activities in which CARICOM and its associated institutions and the United Nations system have cooperated, including:

(a) The establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and its related institutions;

(b) The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;

(c) Combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

(d) Capacity-building for strengthening institutions and developing human resources;

(e) Human, economic and social development in the Caribbean region;

(f) Information and communication technology;

(g) Environmental policies, disaster management and climate risk management;

(h) Gender-sensitive social policies, the Caribbean youth strategy programme and child development initiatives; and implementation of the Regional Framework for Children and other strategies on adolescent and youth development as a contribution towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

(i) Social statistics and capacity-building for monitoring the progress made in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

(j) Development of the agricultural and rural sectors and the critical importance of such development for food security and poverty reduction.

7. Future cooperation and coordination between CARICOM and the United Nations system should focus on a number of priority issues, including:

(a) Efforts to facilitate the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, and provision of support for infrastructures for a common capital market, financial services sector and tourism and of assistance for the development of national integration and public education programmes and strengthening of the legal status of CARICOM;

(b) Increased cooperation in regard to training, education and retooling in all sectors, with a particular view to strengthening national and regional institutions and to retaining skilled human resources;

(c) Development of information and communication technology and knowledge management systems;

(d) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in particular in the context of the upcoming 10-year review;

(e) Efforts to implement General Assembly resolution 54/224, on the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and the promotion of an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea in that context;

(f) Increased cooperation in regard to disaster reduction and management, including flood hazard management, capacity-building, hazard mapping and vulnerability assessments;

(g) Further cooperation in regard to sustainable land development and efficient management of marine resources in order to ensure food self-sufficiency, and research and development in support of regional agricultural initiatives and rural development programmes;

(h) Provision of support for the integration of the informal into the formal economy; employment; development of small and medium-sized enterprises; and improvement of occupational health and working conditions;

(i) Provision of support for the implementation of the Action Plan of the CARICOM Regional Task Force on Crime and Security;

(j) Continued focus on HIV/AIDS, access to care and treatment, and integrated multisectoral approach to prevention; increased control of chronic non-communicable diseases; and monitoring of the impact of social inequity on human and social development within and among countries;

(k) Need for a human rights-based approach to promoting development and peace in the Caribbean region;

(l) Continued efforts towards gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women in all priority sectors of collaboration, and prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking in women and girls;

(m) Renewed focus on issues related to the Caribbean's ageing population;

(n) Protection of intellectual property rights to promote wealth creation and social and cultural development;

(o) Need for an enhanced and more active regional and subregional agricultural policy and the coordination of these policies with macroeconomic policies;

(p) Further cooperation in regard to regional security efforts among the United Nations, CARICOM and OAS in early warning, conflict prevention, and peace, confidence and security-building measures. This cooperation includes projects to assist CARICOM members to ratify disarmament-related treaties and to build national and regional capacities for combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons;

(q) Cooperation in the strengthening of justice systems, the reduction of crime and the use of best practice in good governance and promoting democracy;

(r) Engagement and empowerment of civil society organizations in national and regional peace and development initiatives;

(s) Coordination and cooperation between United Nations field offices and CARICOM and development of a mechanism for continuous information flows between the secretariats;

(t) Acceleration of the process for signing memorandums of understanding with specific agencies as a means of revitalizing and strengthening ongoing cooperation in specific areas of social development;

(u) Need to review and streamline existing mechanisms for coordination, cooperation and reporting.

8. The meeting suggested increased support for the institutional and programmatic cooperation between CARICOM and the United Nations.

9. It was agreed that the report of the meeting would be finalized soon and circulated among the participants of the meeting.

Part Two
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 57/36 of 21 November 2002. It reports on the various activities of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) during the biennium July 2002-July 2004. In the same resolution, the Assembly decided to include the item on cooperation between the United Nations and AALCO in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session.

II. Overview of cooperation between the United Nations and AALCO during the period under review*

A. Cooperative framework

2. In accordance with the cooperative framework between the United Nations and AALCO, consultations have been conducted routinely on matters of common interest, including, in particular, representation at each other's meetings and the exchange of information and documentation. During the period under review, consultations were held between the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of AALCO.

3. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization continues to orient its work programme in order to accord priority to matters concerning the United Nations and to initiate action with a view to strengthening the role of the United Nations. Cooperation in the area of international law includes matters relating to international trade law and the environment, as well as aspects of refugee law, human rights law, humanitarian law and peaceful settlement of disputes.

B. Representation at international conferences and meetings

4. During the period under review, AALCO was represented at the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions of the General Assembly. It was also represented at the fifty-fourth (2002), fifty-fifth (2003) and fifty-sixth (2004) sessions of the International Law Commission; the thirty-fifth (2002) and thirty-seventh (2004) sessions of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL); the sessions of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a United Nations Convention against Corruption and the High-level Political Conference for the Purpose of Signing the United Nations Convention against Corruption; the workshop on the settlement of international trade law disputes (World Trade Organization (WTO)); the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and

* The present report is based upon information received from the Secretary-General of AALCO.

Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO)). Further, AALCO was represented at the African Union Ministerial Conference for the adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption.

5. Representatives of various United Nations bodies participated in the forty-first and forty-second sessions of AALCO, held at Abuja[1] and Seoul,[2] respectively. These include representatives of the International Court of Justice, the International Law Commission, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations University. Representatives of the International Criminal Court and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were also represented.

6. As has become customary, topics on the current work programme of the International Law Commission are discussed during the annual sessions of AALCO. Discussions on the work of the Commission at its fifty-fifth session were held during the forty-third session of AALCO, held in Bali, Indonesia, in June 2004. A member of the Commission attended the session and presented a report on its work. The report on the AALCO deliberations was presented by the Secretary-General of AALCO to the Commission in July 2004, during its fifty-sixth session.

C. Measures designed to further the work of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly

7. In fulfilment of its function to render assistance to its member States and with a view to facilitating their active participation in the work of the General Assembly, AALCO prepares, on a regular basis, notes and comments on selected items on the agenda of the General Assembly and, more particularly, items under consideration by the Sixth Committee.

8. For the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the AALCO secretariat prepared notes and comments on the following: report of the International Law Commission on its fifty-fourth session; report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on its thirty-fifth session; oceans and law of the sea; implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions; establishment of an International Criminal Court; measures to eliminate international terrorism; an effective international legal instrument against corruption; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.[3]

9. For the fifty-eighth session, the AALCO secretariat prepared notes and comments on similar items[4] as well as on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and their Property.

10. Consultations were also arranged during the General Assembly sessions between the representatives of AALCO member States and other interested States or bodies to exchange views on matters of common interest. For example, during the fifty-seventh session of the Assembly, AALCO convened a meeting of legal advisers from AALCO member States on 20 November 2002. Legal advisers

participating in the work of that session attended the meeting, which was also attended by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel of the United Nations, the Vice-Chairman of the Sixth Committee, and the Director, Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs. The meeting discussed law of the sea, international terrorism and corruption.[5]

11. At the meeting of legal advisers from AALCO member States, on 30 October 2003, discussions were held with some members of the International Law Commission. In addition to the statements made by several legal advisers from AALCO member States, the meeting was addressed by the President of the International Court of Justice, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel of the United Nations, the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, the Chairman of the International Law Commission and some members of the Commission. Deliberations focused on the following: responsibility of international organizations; shared natural resources; and jurisdictional immunities of States and their property. In order to enhance further cooperation in the progressive development and codification of international law, it is envisaged that future meetings would focus on an in-depth study of one or more items on the current work programme of the Commission.

D. International economic cooperation for development

12. During the period under review, AALCO continued to monitor the progress made in the work of UNCITRAL. The AALCO secretariat prepared notes and comments on the work of UNCITRAL at its thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth sessions. AALCO commends UNCITRAL for its successful completion and adoption of the Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation, annexed to General Assembly resolution 57/18 of 19 November 2002, and the Model Legislative Provisions on Privately Financed Infrastructure Projects, annexed to General Assembly resolution 58/76 of 9 December 2003. It urges its member States to consider adopting, ratifying or acceding to other texts prepared by UNCITRAL.

13. The AALCO secretariat prepared progress reports covering the legislative activities of the United Nations and other international organizations and bodies, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) and the Hague Conference on Private International Law, involved in the development of international trade law and related matters for consideration at its forty-first and forty-second sessions.

14. The organization continues to be actively engaged in the monitoring of the work and functioning of WTO. At the forty-first session, the AALCO secretariat submitted a report on the outcome of the fourth WTO Ministerial Conference held in Doha, which resulted in the Doha Development Round of negotiations. At the forty-second session, the secretariat reported on the progress made in those negotiations, with particular emphasis on the review of the dispute settlement understanding. A study of the special and differential treatment in WTO agreements, prepared by the secretariat, was also released.

E. Measures for promotion of the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

15. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization continues to monitor closely the work and functioning of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and other related organs. AALCO further encourages its member States to accede to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

16. At its forty-first session, held in Abuja in 2002, AALCO took note of the deliberations at the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea established by the General Assembly to facilitate the annual review of developments. At its forty-second session, held in Seoul in 2003, AALCO welcomed the extension for a further period of three years of the Consultative Process. It welcomed the active role being played by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the peaceful settlement of disputes with regard to ocean-related matters and urged the full and effective participation of its member States in the work of the International Seabed Authority and other related bodies established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to ensure and safeguard the legitimate interests of developing and less developed States.

17. The law of the sea remains an important item on the AALCO agenda. It was included in the agenda of its forty-third session, held in Bali in 2004.

F. Strengthening of cooperation with the specialized agencies and other international organizations

18. During the period under review, AALCO concluded memorandums of understanding with UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross in 2002. Progress has been made in the negotiations to conclude cooperation agreements with UNCTAD and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Such agreements provide useful bases for strengthening working relationships with specialized agencies and other international organizations and bodies. Cooperation includes the organization of joint meetings and seminars on topics of mutual interest. The participation of resource persons and experts in AALCO meetings enriches the deliberations.

G. Question of refugees

19. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization has been actively engaged in the study of refugee law and has been working in close cooperation with UNHCR for that purpose. The contributions made by AALCO on this topic are of great importance for the Asian-African countries.

20. In accordance with resolution 42/3 adopted at the forty-second session of AALCO, the AALCO secretariat, in cooperation with UNHCR, organized a two-day seminar in New Delhi on 17 and 18 September 2003 on strengthening refugee protection in migratory movements. The discussions revolved around the following themes: "Migration and refugee protection in the Asian-African context: policy, law and practice"; "Strengthening asylum systems: challenges and legal responses"; and

"Asylum and national security concerns in a refugee context". Issues of contemporary relevance for the Asian-African countries raised during the discussions included globalization and migration, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the definition of refugee, effective protection and quality of asylum, national security, durable solutions and root causes, and international burden and responsibility sharing.

21. As follow-up to the seminar, AALCO has proposed that an in-depth study be undertaken of the topic "Statelessness: an overview from the African, Asian and Middle Eastern perspective". The study will seek to determine the magnitude and scope of the problem of statelessness in the African, Asian and Middle Eastern regions; particular causes of statelessness; and areas in which statelessness may be related to increased levels of migration, displacement, trafficking or particular vulnerabilities of individuals, including women and children, and approaches or best practices adopted by States to address such cases and fill in the gaps. In this regard, UNHCR is willing to extend its support for the proposed study through the provision of technical advice and assistance, as well as funding, as appropriate.

H. Environment and sustainable development

22. Legal issues concerning environment and development have been on the agenda of AALCO for over three decades. In the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, the work programme of AALCO has focused primarily on matters concerning the implementation of Agenda 21. Following the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, follow-up work in the AALCO secretariat also focuses on the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the related Plan of Implementation.

23. The organization also monitors the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in particular by focusing on the work of the conferences of the parties. The mandate for this was renewed at the forty-first and forty-second sessions.

I. Extraterritorial application of national legislation: sanctions imposed against third parties

24. The item "Extraterritorial application of national legislation: sanctions imposed against third parties" continues to be on the agenda of AALCO. During the period under review, the secretariat was requested to continue to study the legal aspects relating to the item and also to examine the issue of executive orders imposing sanctions against target States. Furthermore, member States have been urged to provide relevant information and materials to the secretariat.

J. Deportation of Palestinians and other Israeli practices, among them the massive immigration and settlement of Jews in all occupied territories in violation of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949

25. The item "Deportation of Palestinians and other Israeli practices, among them the massive immigration and settlement of Jews in all occupied territories in violation of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949", has been on the agenda of AALCO since 1988. The resolutions passed at successive sessions call for the implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as other agreements signed among various parties to ensure the establishment of just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

K. Establishing cooperation in combating trafficking in women and children

26. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization considered the item on establishing cooperation in combating trafficking in women and children for the first time at its fortieth session, held in New Delhi in 2001. The AALCO secretariat is currently collating national legislation and other relevant information with a view to preparing a study of this item. As at 1 July 2004, the AALCO secretariat had received national legislation and comments from 20 member States.

27. A one-day, special meeting was held in conjunction with the forty-third session of AALCO in 2004 on the topic "Establishing cooperation against trafficking in persons, especially women and children". Panellists included experts from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM. Deliberations dwelt on issues concerning crime control and victim protection under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the related Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; international cooperation in combating human trafficking; refugee protection and victims of trafficking; ongoing UNICEF-supported initiatives in Indonesia; and cooperation within the law enforcement apparatus in combating trafficking in persons.

28. Participants view .d human trafficking as a global problem that requires global approaches. It was observed that human trafficking was fundamentally a matter of human rights. It was emphasized that victims of trafficking should be treated in accordance with established human rights standards rather than as criminals. It was pointed out that, since women and children were more vulnerable to trafficking, they should be given special consideration. It was further observed that there was a link between human trafficking and other forms of outflow of human beings, such as migration and refugees. It was underlined that trafficking should be addressed in an integrated and comprehensive manner and within the broader migration framework. It was agreed to maintain the item on the AALCO agenda and to continue strong coordination efforts with all international organizations concerned.

L. Legal protection of migrant workers

29. The item entitled "Legal protection of migrant workers" has been on the agenda of AALCO since its thirty-fifth session, held in Manila in 1996. An agreement for cooperation between AALCO and IOM was signed in October 2001.

30. During the period under review, the AALCO secretariat, in cooperation with IOM, prepared a draft model regional cooperation agreement between States of origin and States of destination/employment for purposes of collaboration in matters relating to migrant workers. The draft text was considered at the forty-first session, held in Abuja in 2002, and a resolution was adopted mandating the Secretary-General of AALCO to consider holding an expert group meeting. AALCO is planning to convene such a meeting, in cooperation with IOM and member States, at a later stage in 2004.

31. In preparing reports for the forty-second and forty-third sessions, the AALCO secretariat has taken into account the entry into force of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the timely establishment of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and the launching of the Global Commission on International Migration and of the Geneva Migration Group.

M. International terrorism

32. The item on international terrorism was placed on the agenda of AALCO at its fortieth session. AALCO continues to monitor and report on the progress of work of the ad hoc committee established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996.

33. A one-day, special meeting on human rights and combating terrorism was organized by AALCO, with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on 27 July 2002 during the forty-first session. The discussions focused on protection of the human rights of refugees, migrants and others in the context of initiating measures to combat terrorism.

N. International Criminal Court: recent developments

34. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court entered into force on 1 July 2002. With the entry into force of the Statute, AALCO reoriented its work to concentrate on the activities of the Assembly of States Parties, the establishment and functioning of the Court and other developments related to its work, including questions concerning the conclusion of agreements under article 98.

35. The importance of the universal acceptance of the Rome Statute was emphasized at the forty-first and forty-second sessions of AALCO. In this regard, AALCO also encouraged its member States to consider ratifying or acceding to the Rome Statute and the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court.

O. An effective international legal instrument against corruption

36. The item entitled "An effective international legal instrument against corruption" was included in the provisional agenda for the forty-first session of AALCO, held in 2002.

37. At the forty-second session of AALCO, the secretariat submitted a report on efforts to develop an effective legal instrument against corruption. The report outlined the progress made in the drafting of the United Nations Convention against Corruption by the ad hoc committee established by the General Assembly. A resolution was adopted urging member States actively to participate in the work of the ad hoc committee, and mandating AALCO to continue to monitor developments in the drafting of the Convention.

38. Following the adoption of the Convention, the AALCO secretariat participated and delivered a statement on behalf of AALCO at the High-level Political Conference for the Purpose of Signing the United Nations Convention against Corruption, held at Merida, Mexico, from 9 to 11 December 2003.

III. Other activities

A. Centre for Research and Training

39. In accordance with resolution 42/ORG 4 adopted at the forty-second session of AALCO in 2003, member States requested the Secretary-General of AALCO to (a) continue to update and improve the technical efficiency of the web site for facilitating communication among the Secretariat, the member States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and other international organizations; and (b) foster capacity-building at the AALCO Centre for Research and Training to carry out further research projects in international law and to organize training programmes for the benefit of nationals of member States handling issues of international law. In the resolution member States were urged to furnish the Centre with information and other relevant material.

40. On 21 January 2003, the Centre, together with UNICEF, convened a one-day seminar on the legal protection of children under international law. Discussions were organized around the following themes: the protection of children under the Convention on Rights of the Child and other related international instruments; international cooperation against trafficking in children; and effective domestic implementation of child rights and protection through national legislation. Participants included members of the diplomatic corps and the academic community in New Delhi.

41. The Centre conducted in-depth research and study of special and differential treatment under the WTO agreements which provided an overview of the working of the special and differential provisions under the agreements, along with the statements and comments made by WTO members in the implementation and administration of specific special and differential provisions in the ongoing trade negotiation process.

B. Publications

42. Each year the secretariat publishes an annual report, *Report and Selected Documents*. The most recent in this series is *Report and Selected Documents of the Forty-second Session held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 2003*. In accordance with the new publication policy of AALCO, the series has been renamed "*Yearbook of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization*". This publication contains background information, an overview of the discussions held during the forty-second session and selected studies prepared by the secretariat on the topics on the agenda.

43. Articles on terrorism and extradition and on corruption were also published in international law journals by staff of the AALCO secretariat.

IV. Efforts to promote international arbitration

44. In its efforts to promote international arbitration, AALCO established the Regional Centre for Arbitration Kuala Lumpur in 1978 and the Regional Centre for Arbitration in Cairo in 1979. Agreements signed with the host Governments recognize the status of the centres as intergovernmental organizations with certain immunities and privileges for their independent functioning. In 1980, an agreement was concluded with Nigeria for the location of a third centre in Lagos. That Centre was formally inaugurated in March 1989. On 26 April 1999, an agreement was signed formalizing the continued functioning of the Centre for a period of five years from January 1999 to December 2004. A fourth Regional Centre for Arbitration is in Teheran. On 10 June 2004, the host Government ratified the agreement formally establishing the Centre.

45. In 2003, the Centre in Kuala Lumpur commemorated its silver jubilee, and convened an international conference on the settlement of international commercial disputes, from 13 to 15 October 2003. The conference was attended by representatives of many States, international organizations and other arbitral institutions.

46. On 29 January 2004, the Centre in Cairo celebrated its silver jubilee. The celebration was attended by key figures from the host country and other countries and international institutions. During the celebrations, medals of honour were presented to persons who had contributed to the development and work of the Centre.

Notes

[1] For details, see AALCO, *Report and Selected Documents of the Forty-First Session, held at Abuja, Nigeria, 15-19 July 2002*.

[2] For details, see *Yearbook of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization*, vol. I (2003). The earlier publication, *Report and Selected Documents*, has been renamed *Yearbook*.

[3] See AALCO/UNGA/LVII/2002.

[4] See AALCO/UNGA/58/2003.

[5] For details, see AALCO/XLII/SEOUL/2003/S.15.

Part Three
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

Summary

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) was granted observer status in the General Assembly by Assembly resolution 54/5 of 8 October 1999.

The present report is submitted in compliance with resolution 57/34 of 21 November 2002, on cooperation between the United Nations and BSEC, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of that resolution. The present report provides a brief résumé of the status of the cooperative relationship between BSEC and various United Nations organizations during 2003 and 2004. Some United Nations organizations have entered into formal cooperative agreements with BSEC and have initiated joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest. It is recommended that such cooperation be continued and strengthened in fields of common interest, including those identified in the cooperative agreements.

I. Economic Commission for Europe

1. Cooperation between the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) has continued in accordance with the cooperative agreement between the two organizations, signed in Istanbul on 2 July 2001. It has been most fruitful in the fields of transport, promotion of entrepreneurship, and support and development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Negotiations have been under way on expanding cooperation in the field of trade facilitation and sustainable energy. In particular, within the framework of the newly established BSEC Project Development Fund, the possibilities of developing joint activities of mutual interest are being explored.

2. In the field of transport, ECE assisted in elaborating the Map of the BSEC Ring Transport Corridor and its Hinterland Connections and in monitoring the process of harmonization of national legislation of the BSEC member States on the basis of their accession to major ECE agreements and conventions. ECE has also supported the implementation of the Ministerial Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region. In the field of promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, ECE participated in the work of BSEC working group on small and medium-sized enterprises and contributed to the organization of a number of workshops and seminars on related issues.

3. The Economic Commission for Europe has participated in the semi-annual meetings of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BSEC member States.

The Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of BSEC participated in the most recent annual sessions of ECE. Possibilities for expanding cooperation with BSEC associated institutions, in particular the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank were discussed with the Secretary General of the Bank in February 2004, when he participated in the round-table meeting on regional initiatives and cooperation in stimulating competitiveness, held during the most recent annual session of ECE.

II. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

4. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) cooperated with BSEC in implementing the project on institutional strengthening to facilitate intraregional and interregional agricultural trade among BSEC member States and its follow-up, in particular on conducting a series of seminars in selected BSEC member States on the basis of policy recommendations elaborated within the framework of the project. Cooperation has also continued on the preparation of a project on promoting beekeeping among low-income rural families for supplementary earnings in four BSEC member States.

5. Work is under way on the preparation of a memorandum of understanding between BSEC and FAO.

III. World Trade Organization

6. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization participated in the World Trade Organization (WTO) regional seminar for trade policy officials of BSEC member States, on "Doha Development Agenda: preparation of the Cancun Ministerial Conference", held in Thessaloniki, Greece on 11 and 12 June 2003.

IV. World Bank

7. Following consultations between the President of the World Bank and the Chairman-in-Office of BSEC in 2003, a process of establishing a formal agreement on cooperation between the two organizations has been initiated. On the proposal of the World Bank, BSEC and the World Bank Europe and Central Asia Region programme signed a joint letter to the staff of both organizations working in common member countries, on areas of mutual cooperation.

V. World Tourism Organization

8. There was an exchange of correspondence between the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat and the high-level officials of the World Tourism Organization, expressing readiness to formalize the contacts between two organizations. In practical terms, the World Tourism Organization cooperated with BSEC in organizing the seminar on marketing and promotion strategies, held in Istanbul from 8 to 12 December 2003.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

9. **The Secretary-General has taken further steps towards the implementation of Assembly resolution 57/34 in respect of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, including consultations with that organization and the initiation of joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest to both organizations.**

10. **The United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should continue to hold consultations with BSEC and formulate and implement joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest, including the implementation of the aforementioned cooperative agreements.**

Part Four
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Summary

On 21 November 2002, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/38, in which it invited various specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and relevant international financial institutions to join in their efforts towards realization of the goals and objectives of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report provides a brief resume of the status of the cooperative relationship between ECO and various United Nations organizations.

I. Background

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/38 of 21 November 2002 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). In that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution. The report provides a brief resume of the status of the cooperative relationship between ECO and various United Nations organizations.

II. Status of the cooperative relationship between the Economic Cooperation Organization and various United Nations organizations

Economic Commission for Europe

2. On 24 June 2003, a memorandum of understanding between the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and ECO was signed at Geneva. Both organizations agreed to cooperate in the areas of transport; trade, industry and entrepreneurship; sustainable energy development; protection of the environment; and economic analysis and statistics. They also agreed to hold periodic consultations, to exchange information and documentation and to participate in relevant meetings. On 23 and 24 June 2003, the Secretary-General of ECO participated in the ECE Conference on the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and held consultations with the Executive Secretary of ECE on matters of mutual concern.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

3. Macroeconomic performance, issues and policies of the 10 States members of ECO, including their short-term and medium-term prospects, were analysed in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, 2003 and 2004, in the light of global and regional economic developments. The 2003 *Survey* also focused on the efforts of the public sector in education and health as well as on the environmental degradation in the developing member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), including the countries members of ECO. The 2004 *Survey* examined trends in selected dimensions of poverty to ascertain the nature and extent of poverty in countries members of ECO. A critical review of national strategies and programmes for poverty reduction, including those dealt with within the framework of poverty reduction strategy papers, was provided.

4. The International Economic Conference on Tajikistan in the Regional Context of Central Asia was held at Dushanbe in April 2003. The representatives from all the countries members of ECO attended the Conference. The Conference provided ample opportunities to strengthen cooperation with ECO in assisting the countries concerned in such areas as macroeconomic policy, trade and investment promotion and facilitation.

5. Assessment country studies on the impact of globalization on economic, social and human resource development in Central Asian countries were prepared and national seminars on capacity-building in Central Asian countries for managing globalization were held in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the period June-October 2003 under the development account project on capacity-building for States members of ESCAP for managing globalization.

6. ESCAP is implementing a project on strengthening income and employment generation for vulnerable groups of population in Central Asian countries during economic transition, financed by the Government of Japan. The main objectives of the project are to compile and evaluate the existing income and employment generation programmes in the Central Asian countries, including countries members of ECO (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), to improve their efficiency, and where appropriate to direct the programmes more to the vulnerable groups of population during economic transition to a market economy system. The activities implemented in 2003 and to be implemented in 2004 include: (a) the preparation of country studies on the compilation and evaluation of existing income and employment generation programmes and on monitoring the different programmes on poverty eradication; (b) the preparation of two subregional studies on the comparative analysis of relevant experiences in implementing income and employment generation programmes in selected Asian and Central Asian countries; and (c) the organization of national seminars to evaluate existing income and employment generation programmes in those countries and to improve their efficiency through the introduction of best practices.

7. ESCAP and ECO continue to engage in dialogue with a view to strengthening the cooperative relationship in the areas of mutual interests. To this end, participation by officials in each other's events and bilateral discussions during these are common. A regular consultative mechanism for the consultative meetings of executive heads of subregional organizations and ESCAP also exists, of which ECO is an active partner. The eighth consultative meeting was held at Teheran from

21 to 23 July 2003, and the ninth consultative meeting was held at Shanghai, China, on 24 April 2004.

8. ESCAP participated in the first ECO Regional Investment Conference, held on Kish Island, Islamic Republic of Iran, in February 2003, where it presented a paper on globalization, trends in foreign direct investment flows and policy regimes and the role of ESCAP.

9. ESCAP has maintained close collaboration with ECO in the field of transport, including in the implementation of the Asian land transport infrastructure development project, which incorporates the Asian Highway, the Trans-Asian Railway and the facilitation of land transport.

10. An important milestone has been achieved in the coordinated development of international highways in Asia, as well as between Asia and Europe, with the formulation of an intergovernmental agreement on the Asian Highway network in cooperation with the concerned countries and organizations. A preliminary draft of the agreement was considered at a working group meeting held at Bangkok, in November 2002, and four subregional seminars were convened in 2003 for four subregions, including the countries members of ECO and the Caucasus, to broaden the involvement of countries in the drafting process. Subsequently, the agreement was adopted at an intergovernmental meeting held at Bangkok in November 2003, and deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The agreement was signed by 26 countries during the sixtieth session of ESCAP, held at Shanghai, China, in April 2004 and has been opened for signature by other countries at United Nations Headquarters for the period from 1 May 2004 to 31 December 2005.

11. ESCAP, ECE and ECO continued to cooperate under the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in the field of transport facilitation and border-crossing movement, with ECO participating in the programme's project working group, including its ninth session, held at Almaty in March 2004. At that session, it was decided that the tenth session should be held at Almaty, Kazakhstan, in October 2004.

12. ESCAP and ECO continued to cooperate under the project on transit transport issues of landlocked and transit developing countries.

13. Within the framework of the project for capacity-building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages, the first expert group meeting on developing Euro-Asian transport linkages was organized by ECE and ESCAP at Almaty from 9 to 11 March 2004, in which a representative from ECO participated. The expectation is that ECO involvement in the project will be further expanded in the course of the project.

14. ESCAP has commenced the implementation of a project to identify investment needs and development priorities for the Asian Highway network and related intermodal connections and freight terminals. This involves the development of subregional overviews for Central and North Asia, South and West Asia and South-East Asia, and three subregional seminars will be held. The project seeks to facilitate dialogue among the member countries and donors leading to investment projects related to the identified priority sections of the Asian Highway and intermodal connections, as well as to improve cross-border transport. It is anticipated that the subregional seminar for Central and North Asia will be organized in collaboration with ECO.

15. ESCAP is working closely with the ECO secretariat on the production of the chapter of the report on the *State of Environment in Asia and the Pacific* that will present the environmental challenges faced by Central Asia. In that connection, the Central Asia subregional preparatory meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2005 will be organized jointly with the ECO secretariat.

16. In October 2002, ESCAP, ECO, the Statistics Division of the Secretariat and the State Institute of Statistics of Turkey jointly conducted a subregional workshop on the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts at Ankara. One of the recommendations of that meeting was to organize a workshop on assessing and improving statistical quality: measuring the non-observed economy. The workshop which received financial and/or technical support from ESCAP, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Asian Development Bank, was held at Bangkok from 11 to 14 May 2004. ECO was represented and participated actively in the first session of the ESCAP Subcommittee on Statistics in February 2004, and indicated interest in collaborating in a number of future statistical activities in the region.

United Nations Development Programme

17. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided financial and technical assistance amounting to US$1 million in the period 1999-2003 for the implementation of a project on capacity-building of the ECO secretariat. Within the framework of the project: (a) multi-State consultancy studies were carried out in the priority sectors of ECO; (b) the ECO library was computerized and books/journals were purchased for the library; (c) equipment required for the establishment of a small publications unit in the secretariat was purchased; (d) the existing information technologies infrastructure of the secretariat was further developed.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

18. Currently, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is assisting in: (a) the implementation of multimodel transport studies; and (b) developing an ECO investment agreement. In the multimodel project, UNCTAD assisted ECO in engaging a consultant and gave feedback on new transport technologies.

19. UNCTAD amended the draft agreement on the promotion and protection of investment among States members of ECO in the light of international conventions and other regional investment agreements. This draft agreement was reviewed at an ECO high-level experts group meeting on trade and investment in January 2004.

International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

20. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) and ECO have cooperated since 2000. Within the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed in 2001, ITC has supported the ECO secretariat in its efforts to promote ECO intraregional trade expansion.

21. In a trade flow analysis conveyed to the ECO secretariat in March 2000 ITC outlined existing intra-ECO trade. A significantly higher trade potential was noted. It suggested a project on promoting intra-ECO trade by organizing a meeting of buyers and sellers to tap into this potential. It was anticipated that the project would have a positive impact on intraregional trade and would enhance business contacts among member States' trading companies. In the course of implementing the project, the first buyers/sellers meeting of representatives from the textile and clothing sector took place at Istanbul in October 2001. A second buyers/sellers meeting, on food and beverages, was held at Almaty, Kazakhstan, in May 2003. The Government of Turkey offered to host a third buyers/sellers meeting, on pharmaceutical products, at Istanbul, Turkey, in September 2004. The matter is under consideration by ITC and UNDP for providing the necessary funds.

22. The same project also envisaged the holding of a meeting of the ECO Business Forum, in order to provide a platform to the business community of all States members of ECO to present their view collectively to the leaders of member States. The first ECO Business Forum was held during the seventh ECO summit and the twelfth meeting of the Council of Ministers at Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2002. The ECO secretariat is now considering holding a second ECO Business Forum in one of the States members of ECO.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

23. A seminar on the management of technology and negotiations relating to the transfer of technology was held at Teheran from 23 to 26 June 2001. This was the first activity between ECO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The seminar was organized by the UNIDO International Centre for Science and High Technology. Both organizations are planning to organize at Teheran, as a part of a regional programme, a workshop on the agro-related metal-working industry.

24. Currently, the modalities of UNIDO-ECO cooperation are being explored, including the provision by UNIDO of possible technical support for the development of an industry strategy and action plan for the States members of ECO.

United Nations International Drug Control Programme

25. The first phase of a project to establish a drug control coordination unit in the ECO secretariat was completed in December 2000. During the implementation period, funds provided by the European Union (EU) and Japan were utilized, with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme as the project's executing agency. The United Nations Office for Project Services was associated with the project and provided equipment. The following activities were undertaken: (a) all member States introduced their national focal points; (b) two task force meetings on law enforcement and coordination of member States were held at Teheran from 26 to 28 February 2000; (c) an inventory mission to all member States, except Afghanistan, was undertaken during April and May 2000; (d) a provisional glossary of State and non-State actors working in the field of drug control was prepared and sent to member States; (e) provisional country profiles for 1999 and 2000 pertaining

to the drug situation and provisional drug trends in the member States were circulated; and (f) a web site for the drug control coordination unit was designed.

26. The second phase of the project started in December 2002. Based on the work of the first phase, new activities, such as meetings of anti-narcotics officials from ECO and training courses for them, are being carried out with funds from EU. The drug control web site has also been integrated into a virtual private network.

United Nations Population Fund

27. Within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between ECO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), six joint activities have taken place, the last being the round-table meeting on HIV/AIDS and young people, held in Kyrgyzstan in June 2003.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

28. In 2002, ECO invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to participate in a joint programme identification mission to six ECO countries. In this joint mission, FAO was represented through its Regional Office for the Near East and participated in the first ministerial meeting for agriculture among the countries members of ECO, held at Islamabad from 23 to 25 July 2002. FAO provided technical support to the ECO secretariat during the meeting. The findings of the joint ECO/FAO mission were incorporated into the draft regional strategy for agricultural development and food security for countries members of ECO and were discussed during an event at the World Food Summit: five years later, in June 2002.

29. Following the Summit, in June 2002, the ECO secretariat requested FAO to provide technical assistance for the preparation of a regional programme for food security, including projects for donors' consideration. In response, FAO formulated a regional technical cooperation project on support to ECO for the preparation of a regional programme for food security. The project was approved in March 2003 and is currently being implemented. In addition to the preparation of a regional programme for food security, the project includes several training workshops on policy analysis, international trade and project appraisal and formulation. The main beneficiaries of these workshops will be the staff of the ECO secretariat and the focal points in the member countries. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2004.

United Nations Environment Programme

30. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) participated in the first ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, held in December 2002.

31. A draft memorandum of understanding between UNEP and ECO was agreed upon by the two organizations and was expected to be signed during the fourteenth meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers and the eighth ECO summit held at Dushanbe in September 2004.

World Meteorological Organization

32. A draft memorandum of understanding between the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and ECO was finalized by the two organizations, and was expected to be signed during the fourteenth meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers and the eighth ECO summit held at Dushanbe in September 2004.

World Trade Organization

33. The cooperation between the World Trade Organization (WTO) secretariat and ECO has been very good for several years. The ECO secretariat is an observer to the WTO Committee on Trade and Development, which it has attended regularly. It has also been invited to attend the event known as "Geneva Week", which is geared towards delegations without representation in Geneva and regional organizations.

34. Regional seminars organized by the two organizations have been held in countries members of ECO and ECO headquarters in Teheran. The two organizations regularly exchange calendars, so as to provide each organization with an opportunity to attend each others meetings when relevant inputs can be provided.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

35. **It is recommended that various specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and relevant international financial institutions join in their efforts towards implementation of the economic programmes and projects of ECO.**

Part Five
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Summary

On 21 November 2002 the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/47, in which it requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on various aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The present report is submitted pursuant to that resolution and details the growing cooperation between the two organizations in bringing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, including the areas of peace and security, economic and social development, humanitarian affairs and crisis management, international law and human rights, democracy and gender issues.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/47 of 21 November 2002, in which it requested the Secretary-General to report at the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the various aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

2. The report details the growing cooperation between the two organizations in bringing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, including in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development, humanitarian affairs and crisis management, international law and human rights, democracy and gender issues.

3. The observer status granted to IPU by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002 was an important step in the reinforcement of the relationship between the United Nations and IPU.

4. The report also addresses the institutional efforts aimed at strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and IPU, the world organization of parliaments, as called upon by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/47.

II. Overall support by parliaments to the United Nations

5. On repeated occasions during 2003 and 2004, the IPU member parliaments formally asserted the need to seek multilateral solutions to conflicts and to support a strong United Nations at the core of the international system. At its one hundred and eighth Conference, held at Santiago in April 2003, IPU adopted a resolution in response to the conflict in Iraq, in which it drew particular attention to the importance of upholding international law, especially the Charter of the United

Nations, and of reaffirming the fundamental importance of multilateralism and international cooperation in solving conflicts.

6. Multilateralism also took centre stage at the IPU Assembly, held at Geneva in October 2003. The need to strengthen the multilateral institutions was debated in the First Standing Committee and, in its resolution on the subject, the Assembly appealed for support for the United Nations and respect for its Charter.

7. In order to make a more pertinent contribution to multilateralism and consolidate cooperation between the United Nations and parliaments, IPU undertook a comprehensive review of its working methods. The outcome of the exercise was the establishment of standing committees and ad hoc subcommittees that bring together parliamentarians from relevant parliamentary select and standing committees with specialized knowledge on issues of mutual concern to the two organizations. These committees recently debated matters as diverse as humanitarian aspects of crisis management, transborder natural disasters, the Middle East crisis, the promotion of international reconciliation and assistance with post-conflict reconstruction.

8. In the human rights field, IPU joined the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in setting up the first-ever meeting of representatives of parliamentary human rights bodies (Geneva, May 2004). In seeking to help international institutions to work better with parliaments, IPU prepared a guide on parliamentary practice, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

9. As a follow-up to the first ever worldwide gathering of speakers of parliament held at United Nations Headquarters on the eve of the Millennium Summit, IPU plans to hold the second Conference of Speakers of Parliaments in August 2005. The second Conference, currently being prepared by a preparatory committee of some 15 speakers of parliament that met in January and September 2004, will serve to clarify further how IPU sees its role in relation to the United Nations. Specifically, the event is intended to build the necessary will, in both parliaments and Governments, to better define the political and operational responsibilities of IPU in matters relating to the promotion of peace and security, democracy, human rights and gender equality. It will also evaluate progress achieved on the basis of the commitments made by the speakers attending the first Conference to provide a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation and thus offer support to the United Nations.

III. Contribution of parliaments to major United Nations events

Parliamentary contribution to multilateral negotiations

10. In support of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2), in which the Assembly called for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments, through IPU, and for the enhancement of the parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, IPU has in its resolutions underlined the need to include parliamentarians in delegations to multilateral negotiations, to see to it that such delegations comprise both men and women and to ensure that parliaments play an active role in monitoring decisions

and activities of multilateral institutions. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in these processes, although much remains to be done. A noteworthy example of active engagement is that between the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament and other European national parliaments that supported the insertion of an article on humanitarian action in the new Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. This article recognizes the primacy of the United Nations in humanitarian coordination.

World Summit on the Information Society

11. The advent of new information technologies has had a tremendous impact on democratic processes and institutions. In December 2003, within the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva, IPU organized a parliamentary panel on shaping an enabling normative environment for the information society: the role and responsibility of parliaments. The panel focused on the role of parliaments in promoting good governance and the rule of law through the Internet, the concept and practice of e-parliaments, and the question of which institutions should be empowered with regulatory authority for Internet-related public policy issues.

Fifth International Conference on New and Restored Democracies

12. As a contribution to the fifth International Conference on New and Restored Democracies, held at Ulaanbaatar in September 2003, IPU organized, in collaboration with the Parliament of Mongolia, a parliamentary forum on the role of parliaments in promoting democracy — the relationship between parliaments and civil society. The forum concluded with the adoption of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, in which it called upon IPU, inter alia, to develop a set of indicators of parliamentary democracy. The Ulanbaatar Declaration and the role of parliaments and IPU in the follow-up to the fifth International Conference were subsequently acknowledged by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/13 of 17 November 2003.

Eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

13. As an official parallel event of the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, IPU organized a parliamentary meeting at São Paulo, Brazil, in cooperation with the Brazilian National Congress. The meeting addressed the main issues on the agenda of the intergovernmental conference from a parliamentary perspective. It also considered measures for parliamentary follow-up to the eleventh session with a view to providing a legislative framework conducive to the implementation of commitments made by Governments present at São Paulo. The outcome declaration of the parliamentary meeting was submitted by IPU to the intergovernmental forum and became part of the official documentation of the eleventh session of the Conference.

Commission on Human Rights

14. In 2003 and 2004, IPU presented its work and priorities in the field of human rights and democracy to the Commission on Human Rights during the high-level segment of the sessions. It also submitted to the Commission written contributions to items on the agenda of its fifty-ninth session. These concerned item 8 (Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine), item 10 (Economic, social and cultural rights) and item 11 (Civil and political rights).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

15. A meeting was held in October 2003 at UNESCO headquarters on the occasion of the UNESCO General Conference to mark the establishment of the IPU/UNESCO parliamentary network. The objective of the network is to encourage parliaments to address the UNESCO medium-term strategy under their agenda and incorporate some of its components in their normal programme of work. UNESCO will receive support from national parliaments in its programmes and actions which will be the subject of debate in those parliaments. UNESCO will be able to provide international expertise in certain key areas in which parliamentarians are called upon to legislate or ratify conventions.

Annual parliamentary hearings at the United Nations

16. The 2003 parliamentary hearing at the United Nations focused on two broad issues of critical importance for the United Nations: global security, and financing for development. The latter theme was chosen to help focus parliamentary delegations on the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development that took place only days after the hearing. The hearing afforded a useful exchange of views between more than 200 parliamentarians and United Nations representatives, including the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and a number of leading international experts.

17. The 2004 hearing, scheduled to take place at the end of October, will focus on the issues of peacekeeping, related humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction, and the contribution of parliaments in strengthening international regimes for non-proliferation of weapons and disarmament.

18. Over the years, the parliamentary hearings at the United Nations have grown in scope and substance, making them a regular and meaningful feature of the programme of events held at United Nations Headquarters during sessions of the General Assembly.

IV. Peace and security

Middle East questions

19. In support of the Quartet's road map for peace in the Middle East (see S/2003/529, annex), IPU adopted a resolution at its one hundred and ninth

Assembly, held at Geneva, on parliamentary support for the implementation of the road map for peace in putting an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and achieving a comprehensive peace process and justice in the Middle East. At the one hundred and tenth Assembly, held at Mexico City, a resolution was adopted on the role of parliaments in stopping acts of violence, and the building of the separation wall, in order to create conditions conducive to peace and a lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In that resolution the Assembly pointed out the need for resumed dialogue and commitment to the peace process, while calling upon both sides to stop all acts of violence, particularly the practice of targeted assassinations and suicide bombings.

20. In an endeavour to lend practical shape to the contents of these and other IPU resolutions on the subject of the Middle East conflict, IPU brought together members of the Israeli Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council for a meeting at Geneva in July 2003. The participants decided to set up a working group of parliamentarians from the two bodies to help advance the efforts of the United Nations to instil peace in the region, in keeping with the road map, which IPU has officially endorsed.

21. Represented by members of its Committee on Middle East Questions, IPU participated in two events sponsored by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People (New York, September 2003), and the International Meeting on the Impact of the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem (Geneva, April 2004).

Afghanistan

22. IPU is seeking to bring its contribution to the reconstruction process in Afghanistan, as it has for many other countries emerging from conflict, by means of assistance projects geared towards building capacities and helping consolidate viable and democratic parliamentary institutions. IPU conducted a first exploratory mission to Afghanistan in October with a view to identifying possible support by IPU to the process of drafting a new constitution for Afghanistan and preparing for the establishment of a new parliament in that country. Following the mission, IPU provided advisory and documentary support to the United Nations team responsible for assisting the Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003.

Iraq

23. In April 2003, at the height of the military intervention in Iraq, IPU issued by consensus a resolution on the need to put an urgent end to the war in Iraq and to re-establish peace: the role of the United Nations and IPU. In that resolution, IPU reaffirmed the right of the people of Iraq to determine their own political future and to control their own natural resources. It called upon the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of the country, and asserted that the United Nations should continue to play a central role in its provision. It stressed that Iraq's wealth should not be used, nor its natural resources depleted, to implement the reconstruction process.

24. The text also underscored the particular role IPU could play in regard to democracy and representative institutions. It emphasized that it was for the Iraqi people to choose their own political institutions, and declared that IPU was ready to put its expertise at the service of those choices.

25. In compliance with the terms of that resolution, and a subsequent resolution at its Geneva Assembly, IPU held a meeting of speakers of parliaments of countries neighbouring Iraq, at Amman in May 2004. It was hosted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Jordan, and attended by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General ad interim for Iraq. The speakers stressed the right of the Iraqi people freely to determine their own future, and adopted a series of proposals for the world parliamentary community to support the Iraqi people in their efforts to build new and democratic institutions in the country.

Parliamentary control of the security sector

26. As part of their endeavours to lend assistance to United Nations peace-building activities, IPU and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces have disseminated their Handbook on P[illegible]amentary Oversight of the Security Sector in various languages. A number of national workshops have been held to promote the use of the Handbook and familiarize parliamentarians and the security sector itself with its contents.

Terrorism and transnational organized crime

27. IPU continued its cooperation with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee, participating in and contributing to the 2002 and 2003 annual conferences on the role of regional and international organizations in implementing international counter-terrorism strategy. During his visit to New York in October 2003, the IPU Secretary General discussed with representatives of the Committee joint activities aimed at assisting countries, and particularly their legislative bodies, in adopting and implementing legislation relevant to the fight against terrorism. Consultations were also initiated with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna, with a view to identifying a joint plan to encourage more countries to ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption and to promote its entry into force and effective implementation.

Landmines

28. In support of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, IPU debated the best ways to mobilize the help of parliaments in achieving universal accession and implementation of the Convention. Through its Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, IPU urged parliaments of member States that were not party to the Convention either to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible. The Committee also agreed to monitor the situation at its meetings and to report on progress made.

National reconciliation

29. In its technical assistance programmes in countries emerging from conflict, IPU has sought to bolster national reconciliation by consolidating capacities within legislatures. At its one hundred and tenth Assembly, held at Mexico City in April 2004, IPU focused on reconciliation as the universal theme of its meetings. The draft reports and resolutions of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security (on promoting international reconciliation, helping to bring stability to regions of conflict and assisting with post-conflict reconstruction) and the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights (on furthering parliamentary democracy in order to protect human rights and encourage reconciliation among peoples and partnership among nations) were discussed and presented to members of the Security Council during consultations on the role of the United Nations in post-conflict reconciliation convened by the President of the Security Council in January 2004. The texts adopted by the IPU Assembly in Mexico City were circulated in the General Assembly.

V. Economic and social development

Millennium Development Goals

30. As part of its preparations for the second World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, scheduled for August 2005, IPU is conducting a survey among its member parliaments that aims, inter alia, to assess their action in support of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to identify related best practices. The results of the survey will be made known on the occasion of the World Conference and submitted as a contribution to the United Nations high-level meeting on the same subject, later that year.

Financing for development

31. At the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, IPU presented the preliminary results of a worldwide survey of parliamentary activities in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on the International Conference on Financing for Development. These results suggest that parliaments are engaging in a more sustained dialogue with the international financial institutions in an effort to increase their accountability and transparency. The survey also shows that many parliaments of developing countries are becoming more conversant with the agreements concluded between their Government, donors and international financial institutions and hence are better equipped to subject them to parliamentary scrutiny.

Sustainable development

32. In preparation for the next cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat is working actively with IPU. Also with an eye to mobilizing further the world parliamentary community around the critical issue of renewable energy, IPU co-sponsored a parliamentary meeting, together with the German Bundestag, on the

occasion of the International Conference for Renewable Energies (Bonn, June 2004). In addition, IPU is planning to provide support to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Parliament of South Africa in their initiative in organizing a parliamentarian forum on energy legislation and sustainable development. The proposed forum will bring together parliamentarians to explore opportunities for capacity development; to engage in dialogue on legislative frameworks for energy development, access to energy and rural electrification; and to identify the potential for public-private partnerships in the power sector.

Least developed countries

33. Since the adoption in 2001 of the Brussels Programme of Action by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (see A/CONF.191/13), IPU has worked with parliaments to ensure their ownership of the development process by improving their capacity to represent citizens, scrutinize governmental decisions on resource allocation and development systems, and increase the number of women legislators. IPU has also provided technical assistance in these same areas to some 15 parliaments of least developed countries, sometimes with the support of UNDP and the World Bank Institute. These efforts were reported on by IPU at the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (28-30 June 2004).

Desertification

34. IPU sponsored a round table in support of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa on the occasion of the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Havana, 25 August-5 September 2003). The round table led to the adoption of a Declaration that, inter alia, calls for the establishment of a parliamentary network on the Convention under the auspices of IPU. The purpose of the network would be to increase parliamentary involvement and efficiency in the fields of combating desertification, soil erosion and land degradation, of pooling information and of ensuring greater parliamentary input into international negotiations and organizations.

Trade and development

35. IPU plays a leading role in promoting the parliamentary dimension of WTO with a view to enhancing its democratic transparency and accountability. Two sessions of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization, held respectively at Geneva and Cancún, in Mexico, in February and September 2003, were instrumental in bringing a meaningful parliamentary contribution to ongoing multilateral trade negotiations under WTO auspices. The focus of the two parliamentary sessions was on trade in agriculture with special emphasis on the reduction of subsidies; intellectual property rights and access to essential pharmaceutical products; and trade in services.

Child protection

36. The years 2003 and 2004 saw the relationship between IPU and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) strengthened around a comprehensive and long-term programme of joint activities. These included a parliamentary expert panel on the trafficking of children, held during the one hundred and eighth IPU Assembly, from which a number of guidelines for legislators were drawn; and a panel on the commercial sexual exploitation of children, held during the one hundred and tenth Assembly. In April 2004, *Handbook: Child Protection* was launched officially on the latter occasion and distributed to all member parliaments. Future joint activities will address the issue of female genital mutilation and the drafting of child-friendly national budgets. UNICEF and IPU are also looking at the creation of a virtual resource centre on child protection to be posted on the IPU web site for the exchange of best practices and legislative norms, etc.

Education, science and culture

37. To bring about a closer parliamentary involvement in the international debates on education, science and culture, UNESCO has established a partnership with IPU in the form of a Network of IPU/UNESCO Parliamentary Focal Points. The Network entails a two-way relationship whereby UNESCO will receive support from national parliaments in its programmes and actions, while having its activities more closely examined by parliaments. At the same time, the IPU and UNESCO association will mobilize the required expertise to assist parliaments with the formulation of relevant legislation in these domains. The UNESCO National Commissions play a vital role in the institutional network of cooperation between the two organizations. In this respect, the Network is in charge of establishing and maintaining close relations with the National Commissions at the national level as well as of relaying information between key actors within parliaments, National Commissions and UNESCO on legislative developments in the fields of competence of the organization.

HIV/AIDS

38. Building on their existing relationship, IPU and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) have recently agreed to an ambitious project proposal that would create, inter alia, an information clearinghouse for legislators around the world. This new facility, to be housed within the IPU secretariat, would come into being in early 2005 and aim at mobilizing the views of legislators in relation to the pandemic, taking up best practices and lessons learned from policy experiences and operational practices. As part of the proposal, IPU would also establish a select committee composed of expert parliamentarians to provide overall policy direction to the organization as well as a coordinated input into the relevant United Nations processes on this issue.

Global public goods

39. The subject of global public goods — currently being researched by the Office of Development Studies of UNDP — was discussed at the one hundred and ninth IPU Assembly. The report debated by the parliamentarians looked at difficulties involved in the definition of global public goods and the need to find efficient and equitable ways of financing them. The debate highlighted both the enormous potential of the concept and the need to move towards an agreed definition. In its resolution on the subject, the Assembly called upon Governments to recognize that global public goods had transnational effects and therefore required joint assumption of responsibility, and encouraged Governments jointly to identify and rank various alternatives in order of financial feasibility and ease of implementation.

Disaster management

40. As part of its activities to follow up on the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002), IPU, at its one hundred and eighth Assembly, studied the question of international cooperation in managing transborder natural disasters. The parliamentarians called upon States to adopt and implement legislative and other measures to prevent, mitigate and manage the effects of transborder natural disasters and to engage constructively in international disaster prevention and management forums. The Assembly also encouraged the international community to cooperate more closely in mitigating the adverse effects of natural disasters through improved preparedness, risk reduction and effective response and to improve, in line with the principles of the Fribourg Process (see A/57/217, para. 15), coordination and cooperation among States at the regional and international levels.

VI. International law, democracy and human rights

International Criminal Court

41. In support of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, IPU is in the process of enlisting the support of the parliaments of its member States in helping to ensure that the Court's business is more clearly understood by member parliaments. To that effect, IPU held a panel discussion on challenges facing the Court at its one hundred and ninth Assembly. The keynote speaker was the Chief Prosecutor of the Court.

Technical assistance to parliaments, including in peacekeeping and peace-building operations

42. IPU continued to provide extensive support to the United Nations in its efforts to contribute to the promotion of good governance and democracy worldwide. IPU provided advice, information and other substantive input for the preparation of the UNDP *Human Development Report 2003: Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty*.

43. IPU and UNDP continued to build on their long-standing relationship in their endeavours to strengthen representative institutions. IPU is currently implementing and/or supervising, with funding from UNDP, projects in Albania, Kosovo, Timor-Leste and Uruguay. It is also currently working in cooperation with UNDP to design and implement projects in Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

44. At the request of the authorities of Rwanda's Transitional National Assembly, IPU worked with the UNDP to provide support to the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians. The programme began in 2001 by supporting the Forum in contributing to the drafting of Rwanda's new constitution and ensuring that it was gender-sensitive. IPU also assisted with the production of audio-visual sensitization material for Rwandans on the status of Rwandan women, with specific reference to recently adopted matrimonial and succession laws. It facilitated a seminar for the benefit of leading Rwandan women prior to the parliamentary elections at which they discussed ways to ensure adequate representation of women in the new parliament, which was elected in September 2003.

45. UNDP and IPU also provided assistance to the new Parliament of Timor-Leste. Activities began in May 2003 with the organization of a seminar on the subject of parliament and the budget process, including from a gender perspective.

46. Increasingly the two organizations are seeking to develop tools for supporting parliaments in post-conflict situations. In March 2004, IPU hosted a meeting at its headquarters organized jointly with UNDP on enhancing the role of parliaments in conflict/post-conflict settings. This was followed by a meeting at Bergen, Norway, in May 2004, at which the findings of the meeting were presented at a conference convened by the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre.

47. Building on their ongoing cooperation, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and IPU signed a memorandum of understanding in January 2004. Under this agreement, the two organizations will carry out joint initiatives to strengthen the capacities of parliaments worldwide, especially in the area of environmental management.

Human rights

48. In May 2003, IPU invited parliaments to play a more active part in the work of the Human Rights Committee, which monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The initiative followed the IPU Assembly's repeated calls to raise the profile of parliaments in the work of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies and echoed the terms of the memorandum of understanding between IPU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Secretary General of IPU accordingly informed parliaments of countries whose report had been or was due to be examined by the Committee in the course of the year of its final observations or forthcoming questions, and invited them to take appropriate action.

49. IPU and the Office of the High Commissioner also made steady progress in developing a joint handbook to familiarize parliamentarians with human rights norms and mechanisms. In the course of 2003, parliamentarians provided valuable feedback on how best to tailor the publication to their specific needs. The launch of the handbook is tentatively scheduled for 10 December 2004.

50. In March 2004, IPU, in cooperation with UNDP and with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner, organized the first ever international meeting of parliamentary human rights bodies. Held at Geneva, the event provided an opportunity to members of these bodies to discuss their work, identify best practices and exchange views with representatives of international, regional and national human rights mechanisms on ways to safeguard and enhance the protection of human rights at the national level.

51. In November 2003, the Secretary General of IPU made a presentation to the meeting of heads of field presences organized by the Office of the High Commissioner in which he highlighted IPU activities in the area of human rights, emphasizing its technical assistance projects and the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

52. The IPU secretariat participated in a meeting on reform of the United Nations treaty body system organized by the Office of the High Commissioner and the Government of Liechtenstein in Malbun, Liechtenstein, in May 2003, and made a presentation to a training workshop for human rights non-governmental organizations and other national human rights actors, held at Geneva in November 2003.

53. In May 2004, IPU participated in the World Forum on Human Rights, held at Nantes, France, organized by the City of Nantes and UNESCO.

Refugees

54. Continuing collaboration between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and IPU saw the launch of the Spanish translation of their jointly produced *Handbook for Parliamentarians: Refugee Protection: A Guide to International Refugee Law* in early 2003. This brings the total number of languages in which the Handbook exists to 24, with 6 more language versions under preparation in 2004. A regional conference for African parliamentarians, on the subject of refugees in Africa: the challenges of protection and solutions, was hosted by the National Assembly of Benin in June 2004, and organized by the African Parliamentary Union in cooperation with UNHCR and IPU. It culminated in the adoption of a declaration and programme of action to address the issues of refugee protection in Africa.

Volunteering

55. Recognizing the critical role of volunteers in creating a peaceful and cooperative environment, IPU continued its partnership with the United Nations Volunteers, as well as with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, by supporting a global survey on volunteer legislation. The results of the survey will be presented to IPU membership at the one hundred and eleventh Assembly in October 2004 and will provide useful guidance to further legislative efforts.

VII. Gender issues

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

56. At the centre of IPU-UN collaboration on gender issues over the past two years has been the publication of a *Handbook for Parliamentarians: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol*. Developed in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women/Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the handbook was designed to familiarize both male and female parliamentarians with the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto and the role of the Committee. It highlights the measures that can be taken by parliamentarians to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention at the national level. This practical manual is now available in seven languages, including the six official languages of the United Nations. Increasingly used by legislators around the world, it was officially launched in April 2003 during the one hundred and eighth IPU Assembly/Eighth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, held at Santiago and then presented to the Committee at its twenty-ninth session. Following that event, IPU organized an information seminar on the Convention and its Optional Protocol for Parliamentarians at its Geneva headquarters in October 2003, with the assistance of the Division for the Advancement of Women.

Commission on the Status of Women

57. The Division for the Advancement of Women and IPU collaborated on an expert panel on the role of parliamentarians in strengthening the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol during the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (March 2004). A second event, on enhancing women's participation in electoral processes in post-conflict countries, was organized jointly by IPU, the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Both events featured members of parliaments relating their own national experiences and helped raise awareness at the United Nations of the key role of elected representatives in mainstreaming gender issues in the political arena and through the legislative process.

58. IPU presented a paper on post-election support at a United Nations expert group meeting on enhancing women's participation in electoral processes in post-conflict countries, held at Glen Cove, New York, in January 2004.

Gender budgeting

59. IPU has continued to develop its line of seminars on parliament and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective. The most recent seminar took place at Colombo in May 2003, with support from the World Bank Institute and UNDP. An important product of these seminars is the *Handbook: Parliament, the Budget and Gender*. Developed with the support of UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the World Bank Institute, this new publication sets out the principles and methods required to develop gender-sensitive

national budgets. It was officially launched at the one hundred and tenth IPU Assembly in April 2004 and is being disseminated widely. As a follow up to the launch, a regional seminar for Arab Parliaments was organized on the same theme in Lebanon, in cooperation with UNDP and the Arab Parliamentary Union.

Female genital mutilation

60. In 2001, the IPU Meeting of Women Parliamentarians initiated a parliamentary campaign to stop violence against women, specifically with regard to female genital mutilation. As a follow-up to a panel discussion on this topic held at Ouagadougou in September 2001, IPU began to gather information on the state of legislation and other national provisons dealing directly or indirectly with the issue of female genital mutilation. Drawing on the work of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNHCHR, a questionnaire was disseminated and results posted on the IPU Web site. This database is continuously updated.

Women in politics

61. A critical factor for gender equality and empowerment, as reflected in the Third Millennium Development Goal, is the promotion of women's equal representation in national parliaments. IPU continues to be the main source of data on women parliamentarians utilized by the United Nations. In 2004, IPU collaborated with both the Statistics Division of the Secretariat and the Division for the Advancement of Women in analysing the data and preparing the explanatory storyline on this data series. IPU has also been an active member of the Sub-Group on Gender Indicators of the Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on the Millennium Development Goal Indicators.

VIII. Inter-Parliamentary Union secretariat

Consultation mechanisms and observer status

62. The Office of the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the United Nations in New York continues to be instrumental in the identification and implementation of activities carried out between the two organizations.

63. Under the new observer status of IPU at the General Assembly (resolution 57/32) and the entitlement for official documents adopted by IPU to be circulated to the Assembly (resolution 57/47), consultations between IPU and the relevant United Nations departments(Office of Legal Affairs, Department of General Assembly and Conference Management and Department of Public Information) have led to the identification of a working mechanism that allows for the practical implementation of the latter resolution and thus for a greater parliamentary contribution and enhanced support bythe parliamentary community to the United Nations.

United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and related matters

64. At its 242nd session, the Executive Committee of IPU resolved to apply for membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. In so doing, IPU will also adopt the United Nations common system of allowances and benefits. Affiliation with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund would improve the security of IPU staff pensions. If the application is approved by the Board of the Fund and by the General Assembly, the membership would take effect on 1 January 2005 and IPU would become the 21st member organization of the Fund.

Conclusions

65. **The Secretary-General welcomes the close and substantive relationship between the United Nations and IPU, which is continuously developing and expanding, in particular since IPU was granted observer status in the General Assembly.**

66. **He acknowledges the contribution of IPU to meeting the major goals and objectives of the international community.**

67. **The Secretary-General welcomes the decision to hold, in August 2005, the Second Conference of Speakers of Parliaments with a special focus on the contribution by parliaments in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and on action and modalities to enhance the parliamentary dimension to international cooperation.**

68. **Following the publication of the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (A/58/817 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General is also looking forward to discussing the recommendations of the report on engaging parliamentarians, parliaments and IPU more systematically in the work of the Organization.**

Part Six
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Summary

Since the establishment of the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in October 1975, considerable cooperation has taken place between United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes and SELA. This cooperation has evolved over the years and has become more diversified in terms of both the areas of cooperation and the organizations concerned. During the reporting period, nine organizations maintained various levels of cooperation with SELA, including information exchanges, reciprocal attendance at meetings, financial contributions for activities carried out by SELA and joint execution of activities.

The progress being made by ongoing activities, together with the implementation of new mandates, appears to indicate that the level of cooperation with SELA could be maintained or increased in the coming years.

I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 57/39 of 21 November 2002 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

2. For the preparation of the present report, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) wrote to the following organizations of the United Nations system requesting an update on their activities with SELA: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Trade Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund, the International Maritime Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the World Bank, the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Institute for Training and

Research, the United Nations University, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Nine of these organizations sent updated information on their cooperation with SELA. Nine others noted that they were not, at the time, conducting joint activities with SELA. The following summary is based on the information submitted.

II. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

3. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session (A/57/128), since the establishment of SELA in October 1975, considerable cooperation has taken place between United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes and SELA.

4. This cooperation has evolved over the years and has become more diversified in terms of both the areas of cooperation and the organizations concerned.

5. During the reporting period, the Millennium Development Goals have emerged as an important field of cooperation between United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes and SELA. The sixteenth Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation of countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, convened jointly by SELA and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance of Panama in Panama City from 21 to 23 July 2003, with the support of UNDP and WHO/PAHO, focused on financing for development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. The participants in the meeting agreed to reaffirm the importance of the Goals and the region's commitment to achieving them within the established time frames. They also urged countries in the region to increase budgetary allocations in the areas of education and health so that the Goals could be met.

6. Cooperation between ECLAC and SELA during the period under review has consisted mainly of information exchanges and the participation of representatives of ECLAC and SELA in meetings held by the two institutions, particularly in the areas of trade and international migration.

7. ECLAC participated in the sixteenth Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation. At that meeting, ECLAC presented a paper on the technical cooperation activities carried out by its experts within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

8. For its part, SELA attended the Hemispheric Conference on International Migration: Human Rights and the Traffick in Persons in the Americas (Santiago, 20-22 November 2002), organized by ECLAC and the International Organization for Migration in collaboration with various institutional partners in the region and within the United Nations system. SELA also attended a seminar-workshop on trade negotiations for the Greater Caribbean (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 14 and 15 July 2003), organized by ECLAC and the Association of Caribbean States; a seminar on rules and institutions for sustainable development in Latin America, organized by ECLAC within the framework of the Cancún Trade and Development Symposium (Cancún, Mexico, 12 September 2003); and an expert meeting on the

free trade area of the Americas: selected issues, prospects and implications for subregional groupings, convened by ECLAC (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 17 and 18 November 2003). In addition, at the request of the Association of Caribbean States, ECLAC prepared a document on main trade trends, trade policy and integration in the Greater Caribbean, which was published with support from the SELA secretariat.

9. Over the years FAO has been associated with the work carried out by the action committees established under the umbrella of SELA, on such subjects as marine and freshwater products, fertilizers, regional food security, the economic and social development of Central America and Latin American cooperation and consultation on plant genetic resources.

10. Although SELA and FAO did not implement specific cooperation activities during the period under review, they have maintained the practice of reciprocal attendance at meetings. Accordingly, FAO attended the twenty-eighth regular meeting of the Latin American Council (Caracas, 7-9 April 2003) and the sixteenth meeting of directors of international technical cooperation.

11. ILO and SELA share the common objective of promoting intraregional cooperation directed towards achieving the economic and social development of the Latin American and Caribbean region. In his foreword to the SELA publication, entitled "Building our destiny together", the ILO Director-General highlighted the ways in which the two organizations could contribute to a different sort of globalization, one based on a fair process that created opportunities of decent work for all based on universally shared values and respect for human rights.

12. ILO prepared a document for a seminar on migration and regional integration organized by SELA in collaboration with a number of other organizations (Caracas, 1 and 2 August 2002). The paper addressed two key issues: international standards in the field of migration; and ILO standards relating to labour migration. ILO also prepared a document for a SELA meeting on migrant remittances (Caracas, 26 and 27 July 2004), in which it underscored the importance of promoting decent employment and respect for labour rights as the best tools for combating poverty in migrant source areas. ILO plans to strengthen its cooperation with SELA in matters of common concern, such as migration issues, in the near future.

13. Through the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNESCO collaborated with SELA in organizing a seminar on migration and regional integration (Caracas, 1 and 2 August 2002).

14. During the period under review, the World Bank and SELA provided joint contributions for important conferences and studies providing substantive benefits for the Latin American and Caribbean region. Both institutions are collaborating in a four-year joint project on agriculture and the new trade agenda, which is being sponsored by the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the World Bank-Netherlands Partnership Programme.

15. WHO/PAHO has continued to sponsor the participation in the annual meetings of directors of international technical cooperation by officials in charge of international technical cooperation within the countries' ministries of health. A special workshop was carried out at the fifteenth such meeting to train these officials in the preparation of projects of technical cooperation among developing countries in the health sector.

16. WHO/PAHO made a presentation at the sixteenth meeting on the regional situation with respect to the health-related Millennium Development Goals. In that presentation, it stressed the urgent need to transform the countries' health systems in the light of the challenges posed by the Goals and the potential role for international technical cooperation, including technical cooperation among developing countries, in attaining the Goals.

17. In addition, WHO/PAHO is currently considering expanding its collaboration with SELA in activities relating to requests received from both the Working Group on Health of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the Health Agency of the Hipólito Unanue Agreement of the Andean Community. These requests are aimed at strengthening the border-area health initiatives being pursued as part of both integration processes. In view of the considerable impact that economic factors have on health issues in border areas, WHO/PAHO plans to undertake this task in coordination and collaboration with SELA.

18. The UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation has continued to contribute to the annual Meetings of Directors of International Technical Cooperation held by SELA. This support has facilitated the participation of States members of SELA in the discussion of major policy issues and priorities in the area of technical cooperation among developing countries. The main themes analysed and discussed in recent years relate to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, financing for development and deepening cooperation between the public and private sectors. Emphasis has also been placed on social responsibility and the role of the private sector in fostering development.

19. SELA attended the thirteenth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, convened by UNDP (New York, 27-30 May 2003). SELA also hosted a regional preparatory meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean for the High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation (Caracas, 16 and 17 June 2003).

20. During these meetings, both institutions agreed to continue supporting efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and exploring opportunities to further cooperation in financing for development. The dissemination of best practices in various areas of development and promoting advocacy for the achievement of the Goals will continue to characterize cooperation between the two entities.

21. The UNCTAD secretariat collaborates with SELA in identifying and analysing the development implications of issues related to international trade and investment agreements. In the area of trade, SELA made a presentation at the UNCTAD-sponsored regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean on the role of competition policy in protecting consumers and enhancing the competitivity of small and medium-sized enterprises (Buenos Aires, 10 and 11 September 2002) and at the UNCTAD meeting on the role of regional integration groupings in international trade, investment and human resources development (Las Palmas, Spain, 15-19 March 2004).

22. In the area of investment, UNCTAD has continued to provide assistance to States members of SELA seeking to strengthen institutions, especially investment promotion agencies, through Investment Gateway and the Investment Policy Reviews. Following a request from the Andean Community for technical assistance

to improve its ability to attract and benefit from direct investment, UNCTAD prepared a background report on investment promotion at the regional level to underpin the preparation of an Andean investment promotion strategy. During 2003, UNCTAD assisted the Andean Community in finalizing this strategy.

23. The UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has continued to hold informal consultations with SELA on a wide scope of issues, including, in particular, the many different financial, economic, social and political factors that hinder efforts to ensure respect for children's rights in the region. Special attention has been devoted to the development of a risk indicator for children.

24. UNICEF and SELA provided mutual support during the preparatory process of the twelfth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government (Dominican Republic, November 2002), at a time when UNICEF was beginning to address the issue of financing for the Ibero-American Goals for Children. In June 2003, the two institutions agreed on the following areas of common interest: social investment, debt relief and debt swaps; development of alternative prognosis scenarios for the region and their potential impact on the most vulnerable groups; follow-up to the agenda established at the World Economic Forum and the Social Forum Agenda; and follow-up and support of regional and subregional summit processes, such as the Summit of the Americas, the Rio Group and the Ibero-American Conference of Heads of State and Government, among others.

25. The sixty-sixth edition of the SELA periodical *Capitulos* (September-December 2002) included an article authored by UNICEF on international development goals and international cooperation. At the sixteenth Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation (Panama City, 21-23 July 2003), UNICEF gave a presentation dealing with the eradication of poverty among children and the linkage of the Millennium Development Goals with goals focusing on children and adolescents.

Part Seven
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

1. The report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction for the year 2002 was submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of article IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (General Assembly resolution 55/283, annex) (see A/59/297).

2. The report of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization covering the year 2003 was submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of article IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission (General Assembly resolution 54/280, annex) (see A/59/296).

3. Since only a limited number of copies of the above reports were made available, it was not possible to make a full distribution. Delegations are therefore requested to utilize the copies transmitted to them at the time of the discussion of the agenda item.